Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4506th meeting

Wednesday, 3 April 2002, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Lavrov	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Rivas
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Mauritius	Mr. Bhuckory
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zínser
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

Letter dated 1 April 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/336)

Letter dated 2 April 2002 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/342)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-31527 (E)

The meeting resumed at 3.15 p.m.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to inform the members of the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Argentina, Bahrain, Bhutan, Canada, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Djibouti, India, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, New Zealand, Qatar, Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Listre (Argentina), Mr. Buallay (Bahrain), Mr. Pradhan (Bhutan), Mr. Heinbecker (Canada), Mr. Niehaus (Costa Rica), Mr. Zackheos (Cyprus), Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti), Mr. Gopinathan (India), Mr. Al-Kadhe (Iraq), Mr. Diab (Lebanon), Mr. Medrek (Morocco), Mr. MacKay (New Zealand), Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar), Mr. Erwa (Sudan) and Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Cuba. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Requeijo Gual (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to express our pleasure at seeing you, Mr. President, presiding over the work of the Security Council during the month of April, precisely at a time when the situation in the Middle East is undergoing an almost unprecedented deterioration. My delegation trusts in your experience and wisdom in leading the work of the Council in an expeditious and resolute manner.

The news that continues to arrive from the occupied Palestinian territories remains horrifying. Not even censorship and the ham-fisted manipulation by those who control the media at the global level have prevented the daily arrival of some of the horrible scenes of destruction and death that appear as if they were already something usual in our lives. Unfortunately, we the Member States of the United Nations remain aware of the inability of the Security Council to carry out the functions so clearly ascribed to it in the Charter of the United Nations with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The situation is deteriorating moment by moment, and nothing happens. Bombs and bulldozers are being used to destroy the headquarters of the presidency of the Palestinian National Authority inch by inch, and nothing happens. Dignity is trampled underfoot and the physical integrity of President Yasser Arafat is placed in danger — someone whom for many years we have hosted in the Organization and to whom we have accorded the well-deserved rank of head of State — and nothing happens. There are emergency closed-door meetings in the Security Council to try to resolve the situation, and nothing happens. Early in the morning of Saturday, 30 March, the Council adopted resolution 1402 (2002) — a resolution pallid and ambiguous as few others have been. Despite the emergency nature of the situation, the timid provisions of the resolution continue unimplemented, and nothing happens. It looks as though resolution 1402 (2002) will suffer the same sad fate of earlier resolutions — such as resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) — whose full implementation has been pending for many years without the Council adopting the necessary measures to insure full compliance with their provisions.

The pretexts and justifications being brandished to justify that situation clearly indicate the moral duplicity of those who threaten, or use, paralysing vetoes. Those of us who are here have seen how the double standard is applied in the Council, as well as the different degrees of emergency and speed in the adoption and subsequent implementation of resolutions, as if the lives of some human beings were less valuable than those of others.

In recent days, we have been listening to how the issue of terrorism is manipulated and how oppression and the illegal occupation of territories are justified under the right of self-defence. This must be denounced and rejected as firmly as possible. There are no valid pretexts to justify massacres, selective assassination, mass detention, extrajudicial execution, the forced exile of Palestinians from the land of their birth, attacks on religious sanctuaries that serve to provide refuge to threatened civilians, torture and denigrating and inhuman ill-treatment. Nothing can

justify an entire people being denied the full enjoyment of its most elementary rights as a nation.

The Security Council, and its permanent members in particular, must put an end to the ongoing policy of the Government of Israel to ignore the Council's resolutions, including an end to the illegal occupation of Arab territories. Nothing will ever be resolved if we do not act with firmness, courage and resolve. The world cannot remain a passive spectator of the tragedy that continues to unfold day by day in the Middle East.

Never before has there been greater justification for the demand for the immediate deployment of an international force mandated by the Security Council to ensure effective compliance in the field with resolutions that have been adopted after strenuous efforts to overcome the veto barrier. The policy of aggression against the Arab peoples, the Palestinian people in particular, must cease. The illegal occupation of Arab territories must cease. The disproportionate and desperate use of violence against civilians, Palestinians and Israelis alike, must cease. The language of force and terror, be it expressed in isolated incidents or through state terrorism under a different name, must be silenced.

Cuba believes that the only path towards the genuine and lasting peace that all desire is negotiation, mutual respect and the effective support of the entire international community for those efforts. My delegation reiterates its support for the legitimate struggle of the Arab peoples and for that of the Palestinian people in particular towards the realization of its aspirations as a people and a nation, including its inalienable right to build its sovereign and independent State with its capital in East Jerusalem.

At the same time, Cuba demands that the Security Council fully assume its obligations in order to prevent once and for all the consummation of the genocide that is unfolding behind walls of silence and in the absence of the delegation that should be here listening to these words and taking them carefully into consideration.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Cuba for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Jordan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Hadidi (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to thank you, Sir, for your rapid response and for your interest in holding this emergency meeting to consider the ongoing crisis and the deteriorating situation in the Middle East.

My delegation forcefully condemns the recent Israeli operations against Palestinian President Yasser Arafat. We believe that these Israeli measures represent a dangerous development that is threatening the security of the region as a whole and is likely to sow chaos and collapse. Such acts of aggression — including physical liquidations, the destruction of homes and national institutions, the invasion of camps, arbitrary mass arrests, threats against the security of villages and the victimization of large numbers of civilians — will not guarantee security for Israel and never have guaranteed it. Moreover, this aggression is a flagrant violation of agreements concluded between the two parties and of the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law and relevant international instruments and norms. We condemn and reject these entirely unjustified acts. We also condemn the targeting and killing of civilians by both parties. The Jordanian trade office in the Palestinian Authority area has been attacked and destroyed by Israeli forces. That, too, we vigorously condemn.

We urge the Security Council to discharge its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations by dispatching international forces to protect the Palestinian people, its legitimate leadership and its national institutions. In the light of ongoing Israeli aggression against the Palestinian Authority and the occupied territories, we urge the Security Council to demand that Israel immediately withdraw from the territories it has occupied and implement Council resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002). Israel must also be urged to respect the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. We also call on the Council to ensure Israel's respect for resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) by allowing the establishment of an independent State on Palestinian national territory with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Jordan for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Kuwait. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I warmly congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. I also wish to praise you for your guidance in this difficult time as we seek international unity. Moreover, I cannot fail to pay tribute to your predecessor, the representative of Norway, for his important efforts and for the manner in which he guided the work of the Council. I also thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his sincere personal efforts to find a lasting solution to the problem in the Middle East, to achieve peace and harmony in that region and to put an end to the suffering and tragedy of the defenceless Palestinian people.

It is regrettable that the Security Council should be meeting today not to consider positive developments such as stability in the Middle East, as we might have expected following the Council's adoption of resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002). On the contrary, the Council finds itself compelled to meet on short notice to consider the Israeli Government's public refusal to implement those two recent resolutions. Israel continues unremittingly to carry out barbarous acts as the result of the policy of a Government that acts under the flag of democracy and waves the flag of anti-terrorism in order to further personal ambitions that have led to military and political repression. These personal ambitions involve targeting the Palestinian people as a whole and, in particular, the Palestinian Authority and its leader, unambiguously elected in a democratic manner.

Kuwait, along with all of the other countries in the area, is aware of the importance of respecting and strengthening international law, and that is why it felt hopeful when the Council recently adopted two resolutions — 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002) — calling on Israel to withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territories and to put an end to the violence.

The two resolutions, adopted unanimously, represented a positive step, because they showed that the Council members realized the scope of the tragedy of the Palestinian people, whose blood is being spilled in vain.

Mr. Sharon will not even allow the defenceless Palestinian people to defend themselves. He is violating the most elementary rules of international law — rules that today are recognized by all. He is turning his back on the most elementary principles of humanitarian law at a time when Council members have tried to emphasize the importance of these rules in preserving human dignity.

This tragic situation is daily escalating, and only God knows the outcome. To avert a full-blown conflagration, the Council must take resolute measures on three important issues.

The first issue relates to Israel's pursuit of a policy of barbaric violence against the Palestinian people. Israel must be urged in the strongest possible terms to put an immediate end to this violence; to withdraw unconditionally from the Palestinian territories; to lift the siege on the Palestinian Authority and on its legitimate elected President, Yasser Arafat; and to lift the siege also on civilians, because this is without a doubt a form of State terrorism, in clear contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

To besiege Mr. Arafat does not serve the interests of peace, and Sharon and the Israeli authorities should not delude themselves: it is futile to try to bring a people to its knees by humiliating and detaining their leader. The Israeli Government must stop flouting the resolutions of the Security Council. It must be ordered to respect the will of the international community, as expressed in these resolutions. Israel must bow to the will of the international community.

Article 25 of the Charter states that the Members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council. An international observation force must be sent to the area as soon as possible to calm things down and bring about peace, and stability, and to put an end to Israel's inhuman and barbaric practices.

The Security Council, today more than ever, must play its rightful role and implement the message of peace announced by the Arab Summit in Beirut through Prince Abdallah — an initiative that shows that the Arab world rejects war and seeks peace.

However, as is its usual practice, the Israeli leadership has rejected this initiative, not through internationally recognized channels but through its favourite method, which is war, bloodshed, killing and violent attacks. This comes as no surprise if we look at

the dark past of this individual who is no friend of peace and who, in fact, detests it.

If the members of the Council do not act decisively and put an end to this situation, the consequences will be inconceivable. It may become impossible to solve the problem if this goes on any longer. The Council is no doubt aware that large popular demonstrations are taking place in the capitals of the Arab world calling for an end to the violence against Palestinians.

The Kuwait Council of Ministers has adopted two declarations condemning Israel's dangerous actions and calling on the international community and the Security Council to take serious concrete measures to put an end to Israeli actions and to allow the Palestinian people to enjoy their legitimate rights, in keeping with international law.

In conclusion, we must insist that the Council address the underlying core of the conflict. Its source is obvious: the illegal occupation by Israel of Arab land. That is why this problem cannot be resolved unless the Security Council plays its part and compels Israel to withdraw, immediately and unconditionally, from all occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan; move back to the line of 4 June 1967; and evacuate every inch of territory it holds in southern Lebanon, in keeping with all relevant internationally binding resolutions, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

We urge the international community, especially the co-sponsors of the peace process, and those who cherish peace to act in order to put an end to these massacres and this barbaric behaviour and to bring Israel back to the path of peace. They must create conditions that will give the Arab peace initiative a real chance of succeeding. It has elicited the support of the world and deserves our support. It is now up to the Council to cooperate in this final stage of this process.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Namibia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): At the outset, Sir, I wish to extend my warm congratulations to you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. We also express our appreciation to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Norway, for the able manner in which he conducted the work of the Council in March.

I wish to associate myself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of South Africa on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Sir, you deserve our further appreciation for scheduling this important meeting so early in your presidency, in particular at a time when it appears to the outside world that the Security Council is either unable or unwilling to carry out its Charter responsibilities and ensure that its resolutions and decisions on the Middle East are implemented fully. The perceived inaction of the Council and the selectivity with which it enforces its resolutions are damaging its credibility and need to be addressed. The list of decisions and resolutions of the Council regarding the situation in the Middle East and the occupied Palestinian territory is growing longer. However, what is important is not their number but their implementation. In particular, we urge the Security Council to ensure the immediate and unconditional implementation of resolution 1402 (2002).

I wish to recall that the latest aggravation of the crisis in the Middle East was caused on 28 September 2000, with the provocative visit of the present Prime Minister of Israel to Al-Haram Al-Sharif. Today it is clear that he has succeeded in eroding most achievements towards peace and preventing further progress in the peace process.

It is of great concern that Israel is expanding its illegal occupation with the reoccupation of Palestinian land. In this process, massive violations of human rights and international humanitarian law are being committed, including grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Furthermore, extrajudicial killings by the Israeli occupying forces are continuing, as well as the large-scale destruction of Palestinian homes and other properties. The international community, in particular the Security Council, should not turn a blind eye to this and should exert all pressure on Israel to ensure that these illegal acts are stopped. All acts of violence, including suicide bombings and the use of military forces against innocent civilians, must be condemned.

The Palestinian people have the inalienable right to self-determination. They have the right to establish their own viable State, just as Israel claims the right to

its existence and wishes to live in peace with its neighbours within secure and internationally recognized borders. The Palestinian people also have the right to choose their own leaders, and the present attempts by Israel to force President Arafat, who is the legitimate leader of the Palestinian people, to leave Palestine should be rejected with the contempt they deserve.

My delegation calls on both parties to comply with Security Council resolution 1402 (2002) and to implement it without further delay. The longer the current violence continues, the more difficult it will be to build the confidence necessary for negotiations. We also call on Israel to embrace the initiative of Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, which was adopted by the Arab League. It provides the light at the end of the tunnel in the current circumstances.

My delegation strongly believes that international observers in the region would be a valuable mechanism to monitor the situation and ease tension between the parties. The Council should therefore continue to explore that option.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reiterate that the only way to solve the crisis in the Middle East is through a negotiated peace settlement on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The international community, and in particular the Security Council, should take all concrete actions necessary to achieve this goal. The continued humiliation of a people under occupation and the relegation of its legitimate fight against foreign occupation to the status of mere terrorism, are not in the interest of any viable peace in the Middle East. Instead, the occupation of Palestine, which is at the core of the current crisis, should be ended.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Namibia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Algeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first of all, Sir, to express the Algerian delegation's pleasure at seeing you preside over the Security Council for the month of April. Let me also express our satisfaction, which I am certain is shared by all Member States, at the praiseworthy manner in which you have always conducted the presidency in all respects.

I also wish to thank you for the promptness with which you responded to the requests of the Arab Group and of the Non-Aligned Movement to convene an emergency meeting on the critical situation in Palestine. I wish further to thank Ambassador Kolby of Norway for the outstanding skill with which he presided over the Council's work during the month of March, which was a particularly busy month.

Last week's failed assassination attempt on President Yasser Arafat revealed the true intentions of the political heirs of the assassins of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin: they are attempting to kill the peace process and its outcome, the creation of a Palestinian State.

Algeria vehemently condemns the Israeli military escalation against the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority. It hails the heroic resistance of the Palestinian people and of its legitimate leadership, headed by President Arafat, whose steadfastness and endurance in the face of the criminal conduct of the Israeli occupation forces deserve the support and admiration of all.

International public opinion can no longer remain indifferent to the tragedy of the Palestinian people, who have been left defenceless before the bloodthirsty onslaught of an adversary of superior military power acting with total impunity and in manifest contempt for international law.

The Security Council, in particular, is called upon today to take a stance on its own decisions and on the lawless actions of Israel. How much longer must we wait before the Council decides to renounce the practice of double standards, which prevents it from taking the urgent and immediate action that is its duty on issues of international peace and security? The very credibility of the Council is at stake, as is the moral authority of the co-sponsors of the peace process.

On several occasions in recent months, Algeria, speaking here in the Council, has described the situation in Palestine as one of war, demanding the implementation of the relevant provisions of international humanitarian law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilians in Time of War. Given that the head of the Israeli Government recently declared publicly that his

country was at war, it is necessary for urgent measures to be taken to end the ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people and to set out, on a legal basis — which has now been clearly established — the facts surrounding the war crimes carried out by the Israeli occupation forces.

As for the future of Palestine and of the region, it is now clear that Ariel Sharon wishes to erect a barrier of blood and hatred between Israeli and Palestinian society. Furthermore, through his unsavoury manoeuvres, carried out with international support, he is also trying to put up a barrier of misunderstanding between the Arab peoples and the people of the United States of America. The Council must question the aims and objectives of that plan.

Algeria calls upon the international community to acknowledge the exceptional seriousness of the situation in Palestine and to reject the linkage that the Israelis are trying to establish between the liberation struggle of the Palestinian people and international terrorism. The fundamental difference between those two situations lies in the fact that young Palestinians who have chosen to confront Israeli State terrorism by giving up their lives for their country have died on their own occupied soil.

In conclusion, the international community has, on many occasions, proclaimed that weapons of mass destruction should not fall into irresponsible hands. Today, Algeria would like to express its profound, legitimate and well-founded concern regarding the possession of a formidable nuclear arsenal by Israel, which surely does not deserve to be described as a responsible State. In the light of the events that the world has witnessed in recent days, the risk of that arsenal being used against the Arab nation is no longer merely a matter of academic speculation.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Algeria for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Bangladesh. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): Even as we speak, war rages unabated in Palestine. It is a war unleashed by a mighty military machine against an entire civilian population. It is a war that is inflicting horrific carnage, exacerbating occupation and compounding pain.

Bangladesh is gravely concerned, as, indeed, is the rest of the world. We are concerned that Security Council resolutions are being ignored, even flouted. It is to the Council that people subjected to aggression turn for protection. For this Council to fail them when such appeals are made will surely erode faith in the system; it will redound to no one's benefit.

We are also concerned that continued bloodletting could further inflame passion, in the region and beyond. It could lead to a slide towards crisis over which the major protagonists would have lost control. Stability in societies far removed could also be threatened. We are concerned about all of this, and more. We are deeply disturbed that United Nations institutions, in which our peoples place great store, are unable to cut the Gordian knot of an intractable impasse.

We are all the more saddened because, now more than ever, there is broad agreement on the vision of an ultimate solution. It includes the creation of two separate States for the Israelis and the Palestinians. Yet a consensus on the vision has not advanced the cause of peace. Israel's latest invasion of Ramallah and other towns threatens to destroy all the progress that has been made. It is in that spirit that the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Begum Khaleda Zia, called for an immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from Ramallah and other occupied territories.

The time has surely come for us to go beyond mere platitudes and to put in place effective mechanisms for implementing international decisions. I refer to Security Council resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002). The concept of an international force to that end merits serious consideration. The Tenet plan and the Mitchell recommendations must be followed. That remains the only path for the movement towards durable peace. The Council and the "quartet" should intensify efforts towards those goals. As stated by South Africa in its capacity as Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, we believe that a special mission of the Security Council to Israel and Palestine could significantly contribute to stabilizing the situation. Or perhaps we could consider a visit by the Secretary-General to the area, under the Council's mandate. We have reached a stage where we cannot afford the luxury of discarding any alternative.

It is heart-rending for us to see the trampling of the mores of humanitarian law in the region from which emanated the three great models of humane conduct — Islam, Christianity and Judaism. What is happening there today is contrary to all acceptable values. It militates against everything that the United Nations Charter and its principles stand for. This cannot — must not — be allowed to go on. The world can, and must, now intervene.

In the language that I am speaking — English — the expression "new Jerusalem" has always implied a renaissance of hope. Could we not keep it that way?

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Bangladesh for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Indonesia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Widodo (Indonesia): Let me begin by extending to you, Sir, my congratulations and those of my delegation on your assumption of the presidency at a time when the Council is considering an issue of critical importance to all of us. Your proven diplomatic skills assure us that our deliberations will result in a positive outcome.

I should also like to extend to your predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador Ole Peter Kolby of Norway, our deep appreciation for the exemplary manner in which he guided the work of the Council last month.

This meeting has been convened to address a situation that has resulted in an intolerable state of war in the occupied Palestinian territory. Such developments cannot but have dire consequences for the region in particular, as well as repercussions for the world at large.

Yesterday, the Government of Indonesia issued a statement strongly condemning Israel's military aggression against Palestine and the person of President Arafat. Indeed, these untenable policies pose a grave threat to the personal safety and security of President Arafat and to the very future of the entire Middle East peace process. Furthermore, Indonesia finds it unacceptable that the occupying Power justifies its military action by using the issue of terrorism as a pretext to subvert the legitimate Palestinian cause.

In responding to this situation, the Council adopted resolution 1397 (2002), which rightly addressed the very core of the problem, namely the creation of peace and the recognition of the inalienable right of the Palestinians to self-determination, through a vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders. That resolution has been strengthened by the adoption of Security Council resolution 1402 (2002). Regrettably, those resolutions remain unimplemented. It is therefore my delegation's firm view that the Security Council must take necessary and immediate measures to establish a clear mechanism to guarantee their full implementation.

Peace is a challenging and uphill task indeed, given the course of recent tragic events and a military option that can never lead to lasting peace. Therefore, my Government reaffirms its support for all diplomatic efforts towards resuming political dialogue and reviving the peace process between the concerned parties. In that regard, we extend our full support to the message of peace emanating from the 14th Arab League Summit, held in Beirut. It bears further reiteration that a lasting peace requires the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and of the principle of land for peace. That is the only viable path to ending the Israeli occupation of Arab territories.

Given the critical developments on the ground and the ongoing deliberations in the Council, the whole Middle East region is facing a serious test: either it will move forward to end the violence and to begin the process of peace, or it will fall further into an abyss of violence. The most urgent option at this stage, therefore, is for the Security Council to take all possible steps, especially by mandating the urgent deployment of an international security force to the occupied Palestinian territories, to bring this conflict to a speedy end.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm the imperative need to address simultaneously the political and security dimensions in order to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Indonesia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Morocco, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Medrek (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. I should also like to congratulate your predecessor, the representative of Norway, for his efforts during the month of March.

The Security Council is holding this meeting four days after its adoption of resolution 1402 (2002). During those four days, the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories has worsened and has become more tragic. Israel has carried out the collective murder of Palestinians, encircling them and their families. The Palestinians have been forced to bury their dead in hospital courtyards. The situation has become such that no human being, regardless of affiliation, can accept it. It has now reached a level of danger that is threatening international peace and security.

The Security Council must finally shoulder its responsibilities in this regard. The Council must demand of Sharon that he stop the killings, his Government's use of force and its policy of vengeance, which can only lead to further suffering for all the region's peoples, beginning with the Israeli people itself.

The current situation is testing the credibility of the United Nations, and in particular that of the Security Council. Is it reasonable for a resolution adopted with the approval of all permanent members of the Security Council to remain a dead letter? Israel is refusing to implement that resolution or to abide by it. Is it reasonable that international humanitarian law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, is being flouted by the Israeli occupying forces? How can we ignore — or accept — the policy of collective punishment that Israel is carrying out to the extreme against the defenceless Palestinian people? Such a practice is unacceptable, and the tens of thousands who are protesting daily throughout the world are voicing that sentiment.

Yesterday, His Majesty King Mohammed VI, as Chairman of the Jerusalem Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, appealed to the international community to intervene quickly to put an end to the deteriorating situation. The best way to achieve that result is to send a force to separate an army that has sophisticated military equipment from the Palestinian inhabitants, who have as their weapons only the determination to continue their struggle against occupation. Such an international presence has become an urgent necessity to put an end to the ongoing policy of assassination and the vicious circle of violence and counter-violence.

Many voices have been raised throughout the world requesting the intervention of a third party to ensure the separation of the Israeli forces from the Palestinian people in order to find a way out of the current deadlock. I recently took the floor before the Council on behalf of the Group of Arab States to condemn terrorism, regardless of its origin. Today I again reaffirm that position, because it is not dictated by the current situation. It flows from Arab civilization and the precepts of tolerant Islam, a religion that rejects violence and gives precedence to the logic of dialogue, negotiation and coexistence among human beings.

To deprive a people of its basic daily needs and to deprive its children of the right to attend school and to receive basic medical care and to trample its dignity can only lead young people to sacrifice everything, including their lives.

We should not be surprised that Yasser Arafat — President of the Palestinian Authority, the symbol of the Palestinian national identity, whom Israel is using every means to isolate from his people and from the outside world, including cutting off his electricity, food supplies and access to medical care — should be ready to sacrifice himself to preserve his dignity and that of the Palestinian people. The present situation, which is extremely dangerous for all of us, is humiliating for all nations and peoples that have committed themselves under the United Nations Charter to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

The world cannot stand idly by in the face of a policy aimed at silencing the entire Palestinian people and depriving it of its legitimate rights. The entire world cannot stand by in the face of Israeli practices — namely, killing innocent people and the mass arrest of hundreds.

Today's Council meeting is of great importance. Indeed, it is of historic importance. In the light of the aspirations of all peoples of the region — in particular the Palestinian people, which is daily suffering from the occupation and the agony it has imposed — the

Kingdom of Morocco calls upon the Security Council, the principal organ of the United Nations entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security, and urges it to take concrete measures necessary to put an end to the arbitrary and irresponsible policy of the Israeli Government in the Palestinian territories. Israel must withdraw its forces immediately, must lift its siege of President Arafat and begin a dialogue between him and the Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, to put an end to violence and to resume negotiations with the aim of achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the situation in the Middle East, in accordance with international law.

Morocco remains ready to participate in any and all efforts or initiatives aimed at extricating the region from the present deadlock. The objective would be to give the peoples of the region hope that their legitimate rights, security, peace and understanding can be guaranteed.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Morocco for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Iraq, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Kadhe (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): Once again, Mr. President, I would like to thank you for your prompt response in holding this emergency meeting of the Security Council to consider the increasingly grave situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem.

On 30 March 2002, the Council adopted resolution 1402 (2002). Despite the fact that the resolution was weak and not commensurate with the war crimes and other inhuman crimes committed by the Zionist entity against the Palestinian people, the representative of that entity criticized the resolution and publicly rejected it as soon as it had been adopted by the Council. Later that day, the Zionist forces of occupation launched a wide-scale offensive, which is still continuing, against the Palestinian people and its leadership. It has also detained a large number of Palestinian leaders and other Palestinians. It has launched aggression against Christian and Islamic holy places.

The theoretical position of the representative of the Zionist entity towards the Security Council resolution and the bloody practical position of aggression by his Government reflect the following: the Zionist entity's lack of respect for Security Council resolutions; a lack of commitment to the provisions of Article 25 of the United Nations Charter; total disregard and disrespect for all appeals addressed to it by numerous States to put an end to its acts of aggression; total disrespect for commitments and international agreements and lack of commitment to any form of civilized moral behaviour; the total exposure of its real face as a terrorist, racist entity.

The Zionist entity and the United States of America attempt to justify the criminal actions of the Zionist entity by claiming the right of self-defence. That ill-informed justification does not have any legal basis and runs counter to International Court of Justice interpretations of the conditions under which that right can be exercised by States individually or collectively. By this attempt, they seek to transform this legal principle into a political means to justify acts of aggression, which are exactly what is daily committed by the Zionist entity with total insolence, in front of the eyes of the entire world. It continues killing, butchering and starving the Palestinian people, on the pretext of self-defence. The result is that the entity is in fact destroying the basic legal principles set out in the United Nations Charter and other established principles of international law.

Certain Western countries, foremost among them the United States of America, have for three years put forward the idea of humanitarian intervention to justify their military actions in a number of areas in the world, with or without the approval of the Security Council. They justify such action as protecting human rights and the basic rules of international humanitarian law.

Today, the Zionist entity is violating all international human rights instruments and is crushing with its tanks the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and its two Additional Protocols of 1977. That entity has murdered hundreds of civilians, has executed scores of others in cold blood and has detained thousands of Palestinian youths, the fate of a large number of whom is still unknown. It has imposed a siege on Palestinian civilians to starve them and to launch a war. It has also totally destroyed the infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority. It has persisted in its recklessness, met with total silence on the part of the international community. It has gone so far as to destroy hospitals and places of worship,

Muslim and Christian alike, to the extent that Palestinians cannot even bury their martyrs.

The question that arises now is why those countries have not intervened in order to protect the basic rules of human rights and international law that have persistently been violated in Palestine. Is this not categorical proof of the policy of double standards adopted by those States — the same policy that is adopted by the Security Council?

The Zionist entity is a selfish and racist regime that is not interested in world peace. It seeks to destroy what human civilization has built at all levels – legal, economic and social. It bears the historic responsibility for having planted the seeds of terrorism in the Middle East since the beginning of the last century. It persists to this day in a policy of terror in all its forms.

There is a historic opportunity for the Security Council to prove that it can force the Zionist entity to show respect for the Charter. The Council is therefore called upon today to shoulder its responsibility vis-à-vis that entity with a view to implementing resolutions of international legitimacy and putting an end to the escalating Zionist aggression and immediately and unconditionally to lift the siege of the Palestinian people and its struggling President, Yasser Arafat.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Iraq for his statement and his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Mauritania. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ould Deddach (Mauritania) (*spoke in Arabic*): I start my statement by extending to you, Sir, on behalf of my delegation, our congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We thank you for convening this open meeting. We would also like to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Ole Peter Kolby of Norway, for his excellent conduct of the work of the Council during the month of March.

A few days ago, the Council considered the serious situation resulting from the reoccupation by Israeli forces of the territories of the Palestinian Authority, their barbaric practices and their siege of the resistance hero, President Yasser Arafat. It was possible to adopt resolution 1402 (2002), which called for Israeli withdrawal from all territories under the authority of the Palestinian Authority, in accordance with agreements signed between the Israeli and Palestinian parties. It also called upon Israel to lift the siege on President Yasser Arafat and to return to the negotiating table. That was an expression by the Council of its responsibility to play its full role in the maintenance of international peace and security. Now more than ever before it must shoulder its responsibility and fulfil its duty in accordance with its Charter mandate.

The stifling siege of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories exposes the lives of innocent women, children and elderly people to a tragic humanitarian catastrophe that should be rejected and resisted by all possible means. My country demands a full and immediate withdrawal by Israeli forces, a return to the Madrid framework and the unconditional implementation of all resolutions of international legitimacy, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

I would also like to reiterate the need for international observers to protect the unarmed Palestinian people. The Government and the people of Mauritania express their total solidarity with the brotherly, heroic people of Palestine, which is struggling for its legitimate inalienable rights, and with the Palestinian Authority under the leadership of President Yasser Arafat – may God protect him.

President Arafat has repeatedly been asked to take further measures while he is under siege and without water or power; this represents total disregard for Arab and Islamic feelings. This seriously deteriorating situation, which threatens peace and security in the entire region, requires immediate Security Council measures to implement its resolutions, particularly resolution 1402 (2002), which the Council adopted last Saturday.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Mauritania for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of India. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Gopinathan (India): Ambassador Kamalesh Sharma, Permanent Representative, would have very much liked to have delivered the statement made by us

under this item on 29 March. He was indisposed that evening, and as he is out of town today he has authorized me to make the statement on his behalf.

I would like to begin by expressing our delegation's deep appreciation at seeing you, Sir, preside over the deliberations of the Security Council this month. We wish you every success in your presidency and assure you of the fullest cooperation of our delegation. We would also like to thank the delegation of Norway for the effective manner in which it guided the work of the Council in March.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made in the Council earlier today by Ambassador Kumalo, Permanent Representative of South Africa, in his capacity as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement. We had already intervened in the Council debate on this item during the emergency session convened on 29 March. Our statement today seeks only to provide additional elements with regard to our position on the crisis in the Middle East.

The Honourable Jaswant Singh, External Affairs Minister of India, has spoken to President Yasser Arafat and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres of Israel during the last two days. Expressing India's deep distress at the recent events, he called upon both to implement Security Council resolution 1402 (2002), which enjoins both parties to a meaningful ceasefire and withdrawal, the immediate cessation of all acts of violence and full cooperation with United States Special Envoy Zinni.

Minister Jaswant Singh told Deputy Prime Minister Peres that by incarcerating President Arafat by virtually imprisoning him, Israel was compounding difficulties, rather than lessening them, making the task of bringing peace that much more difficult. The External Affairs Minister conveyed to President Arafat that India considered him the symbol of Palestinian nationhood and was concerned about his safety and well-being. The situation needed to be contained and controlled. Already a large number of innocent civilians on both sides had been killed, and this needed to be stopped. The situation was distressing and it was not acceptable that it had come to such a pass. India stood by the people of Palestine in their hour of need. The External Affairs Minister conveyed to both President Arafat and Deputy Prime Minister Peres that India stood ready to do anything to bring peace back to West Asia.

President Arafat's Special Envoy, Hani al-Hassan, called on Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee this morning in New Delhi. President Arafat conveyed his appreciation for India's consistent support to him and to the Palestinian cause and the Palestinian people. Prime Minister Vajpayee expressed concern about President Arafat's health and well-being. He stressed that India is deeply troubled at the current situation and stands ready to do whatever it can to work for peace in the region.

In conclusion, I would like to quote from Jaswant Singh's statement in Shanghai on 1 April, during his recent visit to China. Referring to the situation in the Middle East, the External Affairs Minister said:

> "President Arafat represents the authority of the Palestinian people. To subject President Arafat to this treatment is to denude the Palestinians of the sense of their nationhood. This must stop. What must also stop are acts of terrorism. Violence begetting violence is not an answer. United Nations Security Council resolution 1397 (2002) enjoins Israel and Palestine to maintain peace. That is mandatory. Equally, all other agreements in this regard, the Tenet plan, the Mitchell Report, United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and land for peace can bring the peace process on the raise. This is not just a concern for the Middle East, but is a much larger global concern."

To this I would only add the immediate and effective implementation of resolution 1402 (2002), adopted by the Council in the early hours of the morning of 30 March. We call upon the Security Council to work together with the parties concerned in order to bring an end to violence and work towards the immediate resumption of dialogue and negotiations so as to achieve lasting peace and security for all in the region.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of India for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Costa Rica. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Niehaus (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin my statement by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the

Council at such an important time for international peace and security.

I have the honour of addressing the Council on behalf of the 19 member States of the Rio Group in my capacity as pro tempore Secretary.

The member States of the Rio Group note with deep concern the recent developments in the Middle East. In this regard, the Group that I represent, firmly convinced that peace between the Palestinian and the Israeli peoples can be attained only through the peaceful means for the settlement of disputes enshrined in international law, has declared, first, that it welcomes the adoption by the Security Council of resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002), in which, recalling all previous relevant resolutions, the Council reaffirms its vision of the Middle East as a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, will live peacefully side by side within safe and recognized borders.

Secondly, the Rio Group has expressed its satisfaction with the peace initiative of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz, which provides fresh hopes for peace and signals the advisability of all the countries in the region normalizing relations.

Thirdly, it has called vehemently upon the States involved in the process for a lasting peace in the Middle East to make the greatest political efforts possible to implement the Security Council proposal.

Fourthly, it has appealed to the parties in conflict to cease immediately all acts of violence and harassment, whatever their origin, including all terrorist acts and all types of provocation, incitement to violence and destruction.

Under the present circumstances, it is indispensable that the parties to the conflict immediately and unconditionally comply with the recent Security Council resolutions, that they take the first steps to stop the spiral of violence and destruction, that they take concrete measures to re-establish confidence and that they cooperate fully with the efforts of the Secretary-General and the four special envoys responsible for reactivating the peace process.

As the Secretary-General wisely said: Today it is indispensable that the parties forgo the logic of war and destruction and embrace the logic of peace and progress.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Costa Rica for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Oman. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Hassan (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Permanent Representative of Oman was to have spoken, but unfortunately, he had to leave for a few minutes. He will be back soon.

Allow me at the outset, and on behalf of my delegation, to warmly congratulate you, Mr. President, on presiding over the Council this month. We have confidence in your diplomatic skill and in the positions adopted by your friendly country, the Russian Federation, which will enable the Council to attain its intended objectives, primarily, the maintenance of international peace and security. I cannot fail to congratulate your predecessor, the Ambassador of Norway, Mr. Peter Kolby, and the members of his delegation for the exemplary manner in which they guided the work of the Council during the previous month.

My delegation also thanks you, Mr. President, and the other members of the Council for heeding the request of the Arab Group and convening this emergency meeting to examine the situation in the occupied Arab territories, and in Palestine in particular. We trust that this meeting will lead to concrete results and the adoption of resolutions that will be possible to implement.

It goes without saying that the holding of this meeting has not come about by chance. It is in response to the extremely dangerous situation that is developing in the occupied Arab territories. This meeting has also come about as a result of Israel's refusal to implement the recent Security Council resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002) and to respect a ceasefire, withdraw from the occupied territories and lift the siege on President Arafat. This comes as no surprise; it is not the first, second or even the third time that the Palestinian people have had to appeal to the international community for protection from Israel's brutal practices. The Council's past inability to respond has made it necessary to hold this meeting today. Under the Charter, the Security Council is responsible for containing the current situation that has led to towns and villages being besieged, people being killed

and an entire people being plunged into a state of fear and isolation.

Two important resolutions have recently been adopted, 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002). By those resolutions, the two parties concerned have been asked to refrain from violence and to return to the negotiating table.

As usual, Israel has turned its back on the resolutions. In fact, as soon as resolution 1402 (2002) was adopted, Israel escalated its effort to reoccupy Palestinian territories and deployed even more forces to other parts of the West Bank, including Bethlehem, Qalqiliyah, Tulkarm, Nablus, Jenin and other Palestinian areas that have become battlefields in the theatre of confrontation between Israeli forces and an unarmed, besieged people whom Israel is trying to eliminate by any means at its disposal. That is Israel's response to the Council's resolutions. What is the Council going to do about the situation? What is it going to do when a State does not comply with its resolutions, when, in fact, it ignores them, flouts them and turns its back on them?

We once again appeal to the Security Council to fully shoulder its responsibilities, face up to the situation as a threat to international peace and security, take its responsibilities seriously and truly seek to implement its resolutions with the same resolve it has displayed in other situations that have given rise to other resolutions and that have led to follow-up, monitoring mechanisms and the establishment of committees. We ask the Council to heed the request of the valiant Palestinian people, who are so bravely holding off the Israeli occupier and who are the victims of brutal practices such as collective punishment and attempts to physically liquidate them. We therefore ask the Council to ensure the genuine implementation of all the resolutions that have been adopted against Israel's activities and to look into the possibility of finding concrete measures that will genuinely protect the Palestinian people from the abuses perpetrated by Israeli forces.

The credibility of the Council is being tested today more than ever before. Israel must be held to the same standards as others: otherwise we are looking at a situation in which there are two completely different ways of acting — a phenomenon that is becoming habitual and which has seriously damaged the Council's credibility.

One thing must be made clear: Palestinian territory is being occupied and the Palestinian people are bearing the burden of occupation and must be protected by international law, including the 1949 Geneva Conventions and resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). All those international instruments and resolutions have in fact been adopted; they exist. But what is the result today? Where does a people's right to self-determination and to live in peace stand today? We appeal to the Council, and to the permanent members in particular, to discharge their responsibilities and to address a message to Israel with one voice to tell it that it is not above the law or international legality. Israel must withdraw from all occupied Palestinian towns and villages. It must immediately end its siege of the Palestinian Authority and of Mr. Arafat, who is the symbol and highest representative of the Palestinian people and their heroic struggle. That is the only way to truly implement the resolutions of international legitimacy.

My country will be speaking in the name of the friendship and candour that characterize its relationship with the United States. We are worried about the United States position. The United States is not condemning Israel with the same severity with which it condemns Palestinian acts. The leaders in the United States continue to call upon Mr. Arafat to exert greater effort to condemn acts of violence and terror, whereas his freedom of movement is severely curtailed by Israel's security forces and their barbaric acts. How is he expected to put an end to acts that have been unleashed by the sense of despair felt by the Palestinian people when confronted by Israeli occupation? We call upon the international community, the Security Council, and the United States of America in particular — with all the influence it has on Israel — to bring all their influence to bear, in the interests of both the Palestinian and the Israeli peoples, in order to make the realities on the ground understood clearly, publicly and in a balanced manner. The option of peace is, and remains, the only viable path towards a settlement of the problem in the region. Political solutions must be implemented in the context of respect for international legality and existing peace processes, in particular the peace initiative announced most recently at the Arab summit in Beirut.

In conclusion, my delegation, along with those of all peace-loving States, hopes that the Security Council will be able to put an end to narrow political thinking

and live up to its responsibility to protect international peace and security. The Council's efforts must be invested in protecting the safety and security of peoples who are occupied and subjected to arbitrary behaviour.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Oman for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Bahrain. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Buallay (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I am pleased to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. We wish you every success in your work. We also wish to thank your predecessor, the Ambassador of Norway, who guided the Council's work with great wisdom.

The situation in the Palestinian territories continues to deteriorate daily. Israel has stepped up its aggression against the Palestinian people and invaded most of the territories of the Palestinian Authority in order to destroy their infrastructure, which had cost immense amounts of money to build. Furthermore, ever more victims are being claimed among young people, women, children and the elderly through arbitrary bombing and the excessive use of force against a defenceless people whose only weapon is its resolve to end Israeli occupation. Israel continues to besiege Palestinian cities and to starve and kill their people without trials. This policy of aggression also targets the headquarters of Yasser Arafat, President of the Palestinian Authority and living symbol of the Palestinian people. No one knows how these terrorist acts of Israel, the occupying Power, will come to an end.

The Israeli forces have prevented the wounded from reaching hospitals and have shot at ambulances and prevented them from reaching their destination, in contravention of the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, which is the basis of international humanitarian law. In its article 3 (1), that Convention provides that

> "Persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed hors de combat by sickness, wounds, detention, or any other cause, shall in all circumstances be treated humanely."

Worse yet, Israel is preventing inhabitants from burying their dead, some of whom were martyred several days before. This is in contravention of Islamic precepts and constitutes a flagrant violation of all international humanitarian laws and norms.

The Israeli occupying forces have been committing acts that can only be described as war crimes of the twenty-first century. At the Millennium Summit, the heads of State and Government sought to make this century an era of peace, security and calm. However, the current Israeli Government has sent all those dreams up in smoke and made the language of violence and state terrorism an organized policy and way of life of the Israeli occupying State.

The Israeli Prime Minister could not find in his behavioural vocabulary a way to cooperate with the Arab peace initiative adopted at the Beirut summit. He could only find State terrorism, which he is using to subvert the peace process. Israeli practices against President Arafat, the symbol of the Palestinian struggle and the elected President of the Palestinian people, are highly dangerous. State terrorism carried out by Israel can only bring destruction upon the entire region. That is what the Israeli Government is attempting to do. The international community must put an end to the Israeli aggression so as to avert a catastrophe whose repercussions for the region and the entire world would be irreparable and incalculable.

In conclusion, we call on Israel, the occupying Power in the Palestinian territories, to do the following. First, it must respect the provisions of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention and the principles of international humanitarian law, international law of human rights. Secondly, it must withdraw immediately and unconditionally from all Palestinian cities and villages, including Ramallah, the provisional headquarters of the Palestinian Authority, and lift the siege imposed on the Authority's President. Thirdly, it must lift the blockade against the Palestinian people in all the occupied territories, including Islamic and Christian holy sites and houses of worship. Fourthly, it must implement all relevant resolutions of the Security Council, in particular resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002).

This will require the Council to take effective action to make Israel respect its resolutions, which remain dead letter. The Council must reaffirm that, if

the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian and other occupied territories does not end, the region will never be able to enjoy calm or peace. International peace and security will be constantly threatened. Thus, the Security Council must discharge its responsibilities under the United Nations Charter. The Council is obligated to use all possible means to exert pressure on the aggressor State, Israel, to put an end to its occupation of the Arab territories.

We call on the Security Council immediately to dispatch international observers to guarantee protection for Palestinian civilians. History will not acknowledge the Council's due role unless it fulfils its responsibilities. Moreover, it is unacceptable for the Council to remain paralysed while international peace and security are threatened, for it is the Council's duty to preserve international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Bahrain for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of the Sudan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) *(spoke in Arabic)*: I am pleased, Sir, to congratulate you and your friendly country on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this moonth. We also welcome the good work done by Ambassador Peter Kolby of Norway and his delegation during his presidency of the Council last month.

This is the second meeting held by the Security Council in less than five days to consider the critical situation, which is daily deteriorating, in the various Palestinian territories. These territories are witnessing a dangerous escalation of the situation. Israel, the occupying Power, is continuing to massacre and commit war crimes and genocide against the defenceless Palestinian people. This is taking place in full view of, and with the knowledge of, the entire world, which is witnessing on its television screens the excessive use of force; organized killings of innocent citizens; the isolation of Palestinian cities and towns by tanks and military vehicles; the occupation of the headquarters of the Palestinian Authority — the headquarters of Chairman Yasser Arafat, who is surrounded and in a single room there; and the cutting off of water and electricity — an immoral, inhuman and unprecedented measure.

I should be grateful here if we could have a list of all the human rights violations perpetrated by Israel. The world has witnessed Israeli acts of aggression perpetrated at holy sites, mosques and churches, as well as attacks on ambulances, which have been shot at while transporting the wounded. Furthermore, Israel has not allowed the burying of the dead. The Ramallah hospital has been forced to bury the dead in a common grave in its courtyard; this was also witnessed on television screens worldwide.

The eyes of the entire world are now turned to the Council, waiting for its reaction and waiting to see if its resolutions are implemented, given the aggression that is taking place in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, of international humanitarian conventions and of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Since Israel is continuing to flout the will of the international community, it is up to the Security Council to act immediately to oppose Israel, which has exceeded all limits with its acts of aggression. As we sit here now, Israel is trying to occupy the city of Nablus – an extension of such aggression – in contempt for all international resolutions.

The Council bears a moral responsibility first and foremost — one laid down by its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations — to stop violence and the arbitrary use of force by the Israeli occupying forces against innocent, defenceless Palestinian civilians. The Council has a moral responsibility to provide emergency protection by sending an international force to monitor the Israeli withdrawal demanded by Council resolution 1402 (2002).

We have seen the Council hold numerous meetings and adopt resolutions and presidential statements regarding the protection of civilians. Many States have pleaded for the respect of human rights and the protection of civilians in conflict areas and have made this a priority in their foreign policy. Why are those States now silent? Why do we not hear their voices now? Some are even justifying Israel's actions, which are tantamount to genocide.

Here we are faced with a clear case in which civilians — in particular women, children and the elderly — are enduring the worst kind of abuse and repression. This requires that the Council act in accordance with the will expressed by numerous States: that rapid action be taken in the form of the provision of protection to civilians in Palestine. If the

Security Council does not act rapidly and discharge its responsibilities, it will in effect be refusing to abide by its Charter obligations.

The war criminal Ariel Sharon rebuffed Security Council resolution 1402 (2002) through his declaration of war on the Palestinians and by considering Chairman Arafat, the legitimate Chairman of the Palestinian Authority, to be an enemy — and this after the most recent Arab summit in Beirut showed, by adopting the initiative of Crown Prince Abdallah Bin Abdul Aziz, that the Arabs are in favour of peace.

Israel said simply that the Arabs did not desire peace, and it demanded security and the recognition of its State. But its real intentions — bloodshed — have been revealed. Israel used a policy of repression and killing against the defenceless Palestinian people and once again occupied Palestinian cities and isolated them by declaring them military zones, in a clear attempt to push the region towards a total conflagration whose consequences, though as yet unknown, would definitely threaten international peace and security.

The security that Israel is seeking through violence will never be guaranteed as long as it continues to pursue its policy of aggression and expansion, the occupation of Palestinian cities, the perpetration of massacres and the daily killing of Palestinian people. Violence spawns violence. The erroneous justifications presented by Israel, alleging that its criminal campaign aims to combat terrorism or provide self-defence, are unacceptable. It is the Palestinian people who are fighting Israel's State terrorism in order to end the Israeli occupation.

Who among us here would accept occupation and colonialism without offering resistance? The histories of the peoples of all States present here show a struggle against occupation and colonialism. What would truly guarantee Israeli security is full withdrawal from all Palestinian and Arab territories, the Syrian Golan and the rest of Lebanese territory in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and allowing the Palestinian people to establish their State with Al-Quds as their capital. Then, and only then, will peace reign in the region.

From this rostrum we call on the international community, in particular the United States of America, the European Union and peace-loving States, to adopt a firm position to make the Israeli Government refrain from the continuation of a policy of confrontation, killing and suppression. That policy does not justify what is unacceptable. It does not mean that those who have rights will, in fact, have to give up those rights.

Finally, we reaffirm that the Sudan supports the Palestinian people, who are heroically defending their legitimate — I reiterate, their legitimate right — to recover their land and to have their place among nations restored, given the injustice and acts of aggression which continue to violate all international laws and norms, as well as revealed religions and human morality.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Sudan for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of United Republic of Tanzania. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania): At the outset, I would like to associate my delegation with the statement made by Ambassador Domisani Kumalo, the Permanent Representative of South Africa, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

As we are meeting here today, the situation in the Middle East is fast deteriorating. Already, since September 2001, over 1,000 Palestinians and 400 Israelis have died, the majority of whom were civilians. The toll of the dead is mounting by the day. Reports emanating from the region paint a very grim picture.

Last month the Security Council met in an emergency session and adopted resolution 1397 (2002) of 12 March, which had no dissenting voice. The resolution was unequivocal in terms of what the Council demanded of the parties. There has been absolutely no visible movement towards compliance with the resolution. On the contrary, what is evident is the systematic destruction of the Palestinian Authority and the confinement of its leader to his offices, with little or no services. That situation can only fuel more anger, resentment and, to say the least, humiliation.

On 30 March, the Security Council adopted resolution 1402 (2002) which, inter alia, in paragraph 1 "calls for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah". The situation on the ground shows the opposite. More cities are being occupied, and one wonders what the fate of the occupied territories will be.

An analysis of the situation reveals the following: the destruction of the Palestinian Authority can be construed as undermining any semblance of the right of the Palestinians to a State of their own. This conclusion is borne out by the fact that no statement to that effect has come from the Israeli authorities in the current campaign. The right to self-determination is provided for in the Charter of the Organization. No amount of prevarication can assuage the determination of a people to free themselves and establish their own self-rule.

My Government is gravely concerned at the escalation of violence and of the military incursions in the Palestinian Authority areas. The incursions have been accompanied by widespread destruction of hard-earned properties, particularly in Palestinian areas. Collective punishment is being visited on the Palestinian people, violating the basic tenets of the Organization.

In our previous interventions, we had occasion to speak of the disproportionate use of force by the Israeli authorities. The situation is even worse today. One need not emphasize the unequal strength of forces, to put it mildly, between the parties. In making appeals to the parties, it is important to take that reality into account.

My Government appeals strongly to the Security Council to take urgent action to stop the carnage that is going on in the region. The requirements of security have to be balanced by an unequivocal assurance to the Palestinians that statehood, both viable and respected, is around the corner. Violence or attacks will not solve the Palestinian question or ensure the security of Israel.

My Government believes that for any meaningful movement towards resolution of the crisis, the authority and safety of President Arafat have to be guaranteed. The Council should have no ambiguity on the issue.

My Government appeals to both sides to comply with Security Council resolutions, but more so to the Government of Israel, which has the upper hand in the current confrontation. At the end of the day, only peaceful negotiations will provide the much-needed solution to the historic conflict. It is therefore incumbent upon both parties to urgently summon the political will to return to the negotiations. Only a couple of weeks ago there seemed to be some glimmers of hope that a negotiated resolution was possible. Now one wonders whether it has been dashed.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my Government's support for the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and his tireless efforts to achieve a ceasefire and a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The situation demands of the Security Council urgent action in conformity with Article 24, paragraph 1, and other relevant sections of the Charter. The world demands resolute action, and nothing less. There should be no further unnecessary loss of life, especially of civilians. We appeal to the Council to draw on the vast arsenal of instruments at its disposal in order to restore peace in the region. We believe that the major players should have unfettered freedom to be a part of the solution.

Time is of the essence. It is our hope that the Council will not be found wanting. The road map for the Palestinians should be laid out so as to give them hope and determination.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Djibouti. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting at short notice, given the calamity in the Palestinian territories and the conflagration raging there. Since the adoption of resolution 1402 (2002) last Saturday, the situation, instead of improving, has got out of hand to an alarming and dangerous degree. The international outrage and the incessant calls for restraint, ceasefire and immediate withdrawal, have fallen on deaf ears. Israel has expanded its war and continued its relentless military offensive directed solely at the infrastructure and institutions of the Palestinian Authority. In the words of the Secretary-General, when addressing the Council on Monday, "It would take a reckless optimist to say that the worst is over".

I applaud the Secretary-General for his courage and for his forthright and candid statement on the continuing chaos and bloodshed. Indeed, resolution 1402 (2002) is the best available instrument for halting the undisguised menace to peace and security in the region.

As we have stated all too often, my country condemns all attacks against civilian populations, whether Israeli or Palestinian. But the kind of terror

inflicted upon the Palestinian leadership, people, security infrastructure and institutions in the past few days defied all imagination. Israel has embarked on an unprecedented military folly that will haunt it forever. The massive Israeli military operations point to a widening reoccupation of all territories under Palestinian control.

Mr. Sharon's misguided display of military might may cripple and paralyse the infrastructure and the functioning of the Palestinian Authority, and may also worsen the plight of the people. But brute force will not kill their spirit. Mr. Sharon's relentless pursuit of a military strategy that basically seeks to undermine the Palestinian Authority, while at the same time demanding that it crack down on the militant groups, is short-sighted. Such a policy is bound to engender hopelessness and breed more violence.

Both the Palestinian and Israeli peoples have the right to live in peace and security, with a sure future. The current one-sided war dims that prospect and helps only to further escalate the suffering on both sides. We are witnessing unbridled brutal aggression. Mr. Arafat continues to languish in prison in his besieged headquarters. The vengeful assault on the symbol of Palestinian nationhood will have serious consequences. It is also a slap in the face of Arab leaders who, for the first time in history, have offered Israel normal relations with all Arab States in exchange for ending the occupation of Palestinian lands and for withdrawal from all territories occupied in the 1967 war.

One of the perplexing questions that is still begging for an answer is this: who has the power and influence to restrain Sharon's military machine? Given the current escalation of the bloodshed, the prevarication and impotence of the international community is numbing, to say the least. Those who are supposed to make a difference in this insane situation are trapped between inaction, incoherence and distant hope.

As the Secretary-General argued forcefully before the Council on Monday, security and peace must be addressed in parallel in the spirit of Security Council resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002). The legitimate security concerns of Israel cannot be addressed independently or in isolation, without taking into full consideration the legitimate political aspirations of the Palestinian people. In this context, the readiness of the Arab world to live in peace with Israel deserves the undivided attention of Israel. This is, we believe, the only way out of the hatred, mistrust and pervasive vulnerability to acts of extremism on both sides. We hope that the Council will live up to expectations with respect to the maintenance of peace and security throughout the whole world, particularly given the current circumstances in the Middle East.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Djibouti for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Bhutan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Pradhan (Bhutan): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. Allow me also to express our admiration for the work done by your predecessor, the representative of Norway, Peter Kolby, during his presidency last month.

We are here because we are alarmed by the escalating and unending violence between Israel and the Palestinians. We are alarmed by the fact that, despite all the authority and responsibility given by the Charter to the Security Council, this body has not been able to bring about a cessation of the terrible violence that has persisted over months, years and decades, let alone to find a solution to this longstanding problem in the Middle East. We are alarmed by the fact that the big Powers — the permanent members of the Security Council — to which the international community looks up for guidance and action, have not been able to move the parties in the Middle East to give up violence and find a solution to their problems through dialogue.

The problem between the people of Palestine and the State of Israel has been caught up in a vicious circle of violence, death and destruction. The doctrine of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" will only fuel that vicious circle. Hatred and violence beget hatred and violence. The circle must be broken. The Security Council must work towards breaking the circle, and it must not lose an opportunity to do so when it sees one.

My delegation welcomed the proposal of the Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We saw in it the ingredients of breaking the vicious circle. My delegation urges the Security Council to start with the initiative launched by the Crown Prince. In addition, the people in the region, whether Arabs or Israelis,

have to change their outlook with respect to each other. No matter what, they are neighbours, and peace and cooperation are surely better than death, violence and destruction.

In a globalizing and interdependent world — a world that is moving towards freer movement, free markets and greater interaction — no people or nation can exist in isolation or be an island unto itself. That realization is vital for the long-term peace and stability of the region.

Finally, the Bhutanese delegation calls upon the Security Council to further intensify its efforts to bring about an immediate cessation of the violence prevailing in the Middle East.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Qatar, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like, on behalf of Qatar, Chairman of the ninth summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. We are convinced that your wisdom and experience promise success in the Council's deliberations. Your prompt response to our request for an emergency meeting to consider the dangerous situation in occupied Palestine, including Jerusalem, is a sign that augurs well for us. My delegation would also like to thank Ambassador Ole Peter Kolby of Norway for the able and wise manner in which he conducted the Council's deliberations last month.

I shall not refer to the tragic situation of the Palestinian people and its President, Chairman Arafat, who are under Israeli attack and occupation, because I am convinced that the Council knows all there is to know about Israel's organized killings and massive violations of international law and its contempt for the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 1949. However, I will reiterate that the Council is responsible for what is happening in the occupied Palestinian territories. Ever since it declined to send international observers to that region, things have gone from bad to worse. That is because the Council hesitated to adopt the robust initiative that would have been in the interests of both parties, on the excuse that Israel had rejected it. Obviously, Israel has no wish for observers, who would reveal the abuses it is committing against defenceless Palestinians. It continues to flout resolutions, including resolution 1402 (2002), which calls upon it to withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territories, declaring quite unambiguously that it refuses to comply with the provisions of that Council resolution, although the Council is the supreme organ charged with the maintenance of international peace and security.

Some are trying naively to explain the Israeli onslaught by categorizing it as self-defence, but how can one think that destroying and setting fire to a neighbour's land will bring peace? It is only through dialogue and negotiations that the Palestinian people can regain their occupied land and gain their independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital. Israel must understand that it will never enjoy peace while it insists on keeping that land. During their Summit in Beirut, the leaders of Arab States, in good faith, spoke of their desire to have a good-neighbourly relationship with Israel.

The Middle East region is experiencing unprecedented tension. I hope I do not seem to exaggerate when I say that it is about to explode. We must make every possible effort to save what can still be saved. We must take practical and concrete measures that will cause Israel to fully implement resolution 1402 (2002). We must send international peacekeeping forces to the region and pressure Israel to return to the negotiating table to do what is necessary to restore peace between Palestine and Israel to bring the peace process back to the point where it left off.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Qatar for his kind words addressed to my delegation.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of New Zealand, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. MacKay (New Zealand): I should like to join others in congratulating Russia on its assumption of the presidency and in thanking Norway for the way in which it presided over the Council last month.

The issue under consideration by the Council today is one of the utmost gravity. New Zealand deplores in the strongest terms the increased intensity of the violence, which is simply putting a durable solution farther out of reach. The fact that it has

escalated so dramatically in such a short period prompts us to address the Council today. We urge both sides to reflect on where this terrible violence is leading.

New Zealand has already criticized the use of excessive force by the Israeli Defence Force, along with its stated policy of assassinations, which should be halted immediately. New Zealand condemns the policy of extrajudicial executions and joins others in urging an end to the occupation of the Palestinian Authority headquarters in Ramallah and the attempted isolation and exile of the Palestinian leader, Chairman Arafat.

New Zealand views plans to further expand Israeli settlements in the occupied territories as a particularly provocative obstacle to reconciliation and calls on the Israeli Government to halt such action.

We also deplore and condemn in the strongest terms the suicide bombings that have claimed the lives of innocent Israeli civilians. Those responsible for sending young people to their deaths in this way and arbitrarily slaughtering civilians should be brought to justice. Neither side in this conflict will come closer to achieving their objectives by the use of violent means.

Together with other speakers today, we urge full and immediate implementation and compliance with resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002). The international community has reflected in those resolutions its strong commitment to a peaceful, negotiated settlement in the Middle East. New Zealand has consistently supported a two-State solution that recognizes Israel's right to secure, agreed borders and that of the Palestinians to have a viable State in which self-determination and social and economic progress can be achieved.

We reinforce the calls made by the European Union, Chile and others today for the parties to accept observers. A neutral third party monitoring mechanism under a Security Council mandate would help support a ceasefire and begin the rebuilding of trust between the two parties. There is an urgent need for the leadership of both the Palestinian and Israeli peoples to display a goodfaith return to the peace process and seek a durable solution based on respect for human rights and international law. We call on both parties to turn their backs on violence and demonstrate a willingness to begin a process that may lead to the durable peace for which we all so greatly hope.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of New Zealand for his kind words addressed to the Russian delegation.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Cyprus, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Zackheos (Cyprus): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Cyprus Government. We have also aligned ourselves with the statement delivered by Spain on behalf of the European Union.

The Government and the people of Cyprus express their profound concern and sorrow at the worsening situation in the Middle East and condemn violence and any actions resulting in innocent victims, be they Israelis or Palestinians.

We express full sympathy and solidarity with President Yasser Arafat, whom we consider the legitimate leader and representative of the Palestinian people, and we call upon the Israeli troops to withdraw immediately from Ramallah and the rest of the Palestinian territories. We also call for an immediate ceasefire and for resumption of dialogue in order to rescue the peace process. In that respect, we join the entire international community in calling for the immediate and full implementation of Security Council resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002).

We urge Israel to desist from actions the thrust of which is the collective punishment and humiliation of the Palestinian population and to avoid a disproportionate response to violence. We condemn the extrajudicial executions of Palestinians, which are illegal under international law. We also believe that actions against medical and humanitarian institutions and personnel are absolutely unacceptable. We call for full adherence to international law and international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention. In that regard, we express our opposition to illegal Israeli settlement activities.

We are particularly alarmed at reports of an impending operation against Palestinians who have sought refuge in the Church of the Nativity. We urge the resolution of this issue in such a way as to respect the sanctity of that most important religious site. The same goes for all other religious sites which have unfortunately fallen victim to attack and unwarranted destruction due to the hostilities. We call on Israel, as

the occupying Power, to abide by its international obligations and to exercise maximum restraint.

Let me also underline that we strongly condemn any and all forms of terrorism, for which there is no justification, and we support the right of Israel and all other States of the region to live in peace and security.

The Cyprus Government will support any international initiative or effort aimed at preventing the conflict from escalating further, and we urge those who have the power to do so to assist in achieving an immediate ceasefire and the return of the parties to the negotiating table. In that respect, we will support an increased and urgent role by the "quartet", and we call for the parties to cooperate fully with Special Envoy Zinni and others towards the implementation of the Tenet work plan and the Mitchell report's recommendations. We fully support the establishment of a third-party monitoring mechanism.

We also welcome the declaration adopted at the recent Arab League meeting in Beirut, and we reiterate our support for a just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). We support a solution that will put an end to the occupation of Arab lands and to the plight of the Palestinian people, ensuring the fulfilment of their legitimate rights, including their right to an independent State. The solution of the Middle East problem will bring stability to this sensitive region of the world, will ensure normal relations and the safety and security of all countries of the region, and will put an end to violence, strengthening the forces of moderation and cooperation.

Finally, allow me to reiterate the unwavering support of Cyprus for the pursuit of peace in the region. The Government and the people of Cyprus, who traditionally have strong bonds of friendship with both the Palestinian and Israeli peoples, stand ready to play a constructive role towards the achievement of this goal. It is in this context that my Government has offered to host, later this month, in Nicosia, the next meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which we hope will contribute in its own way to building the necessary bridges of understanding between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Lebanon. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Diab (Lebanon)(*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Tunisia as Chairman of the Arab Group.

It gives us pleasure, Sir, to see you presiding over the Security Council this month; we are confident that your wise leadership will guide the Council to the best possible results. We would also like to express our thanks to Ambassador Kolby for the strenuous efforts he made as President last month. My delegation would further like to express to you our utmost appreciation for your prompt response to the request to hold this emergency meeting of the Security Council to consider the extremely serious situation in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The current serious deterioration in the occupied Arab territories and the abhorrent escalation of aggression by Israel against the Palestinian people and its National Authority represent a flagrant violation of international law and international humanitarian law, particularly the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 1949. What is more dangerous than all that is that Israel exercises this State terrorism and commits war crimes against a people whose land it occupies in blatant violation and defiance of the resolutions of this Council, which has repeatedly called upon Israel to implement its resolutions.

This series of criminal actions by Israel against the Palestinian people has led, since the beginning of the intifada, to the death of more than 1,500 martyrs and to thousands of injured people among the Palestinians, the overwhelming majority of whom are civilians, particularly children. Human rights associations and organizations have reflected these facts in their reports and have exposed the criminal practices to which the Palestinians are subjected every day. They have repeatedly called for intervention by the international community with a view to putting an end to these practices. The situation is becoming more serious every day, a fact that has been recalled by the Secretary-General on more than one occasion.

In light of the escalation of acts of destruction and murder of the Palestinians, the cadres of the Palestinian resistance and its leadership, the Security Council is duty-bound to fulfil its mandate in

accordance with the Charter to intervene to preserve peace and security and prevent further escalation of the situation in the region. In this context, the Council is called upon to force Israel immediately to end its acts of aggression in the occupied territories and to abandon its policy of siege, starvation and assassination against the Palestinian people. It should also show respect for the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, being the occupying force in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem.

The Security Council should demand that Israel immediately implement its relevant resolutions, withdraw from Palestinian territories under occupation and end the siege against the Palestinian Authority. The Council is also duty-bound to dispatch an international protection force and to provide adequate and prompt assistance to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people under occupation and put an end to the siege imposed upon them.

The League of Arab States held a summit meeting in Beirut on 27 and 28 March. It adopted an historic resolution that was welcomed by the entire international community, with the exception of Israel. The Arab leaders adopted the initiative by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Abdullah ibn Abdul Aziz as an Arab peace initiative. The Arab leaders, by their resolution, have opted once again for a just and comprehensive peace as a strategic option. It was based on their conviction that a military solution to the conflict has not and will not achieve peace and security in the region.

In spite of the call by the Arab leaders to Israel to follow their suit and opt for peace, Israel has rejected that Arab peace initiative and has responded to it with gunfire, a total occupation of the Palestinian territories and a siege of the Palestinian people and its leadership.

The root cause of the conflict is Israel's continuation of its policy of occupying other people' s land. Israel must realize that the policy of violence and destruction can only lead to counter-violence and destruction and that peace and security will not be achieved unless a comprehensive and just peace based on relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the principle of land for peace are complied with.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker on the list is the representative of Argentina. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Listre (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on taking on the presidency of the Security Council. I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Kolby of Norway, your predecessor, for his very efficient guidance during the month of March, which made it possible to achieve resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002).

The Argentine Republic is extremely preoccupied about the worsening situation in the Middle East. This issue is not foreign to my country, because historically Argentina has close links with the countries of the region. In our country, there are Arab and Jewish communities that live together in peace.

As a result of the worsening of the crisis in the Middle East over the past few days, the Argentine Government published a communiqué on 30 March supporting resolution 1402 (2002), which had been adopted that very day by the Security Council. Four days later, when the situation worsened even more, Argentina restated its support and appealed to the parties to urgently take the necessary steps to put an end to violence and terrorism and to embark on the only possible path towards a resolution of this horrifying conflict, to which there can be no military solution. The only possible solution will be found through dialogue and a return to the negotiating table, which are tools to achieve an effective peace. For that to be possible, it is necessary to disarm the inflamed spirits of both peoples, which are now dominated by rancour, revenge and mutual distrust. It is vital that Israel make a clear commitment to accept the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to a viable and democratic Palestinian State. On the Palestinian side, what is necessary is a genuine and unambiguous commitment to reject terrorism and to recognize Israel's inalienable right to live in peace within secure borders that are by the international community, in particular by the other States of the region.

At this difficult juncture, the Argentine Government joins the rest of the international community in calling upon the Government of Israel and the Palestine Authority to take the urgent measures necessary to facilitate concrete steps towards dialogue and the search for peace. In this regard, it will be necessary to comply in good faith with the letter and the spirit of resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and

1397 (2002), and to start to implement the recently adopted resolution 1402 (2002).

Finally, my Government acknowledges the efforts of the United States, the European Union, the Russian Federation and the Secretary-General that are being made through their special envoys to try to bring about an immediate ceasefire.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Argentina for his kind words addressed to our delegation.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Canada. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Heinbecker (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I welcome the opportunity to speak in this debate and to endorse Security Council resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002). Those instruments offer a way out of the ever-worsening spiral of violence in the Middle East. That spiral of violence is a threat to peace and stability that goes well beyond the confines of the current fighting, and it is having disastrous consequences for people on both sides.

(*spoke in English*)

People's hopes, their dignity and their lives are being progressively violated, denied, diminished and destroyed. Canada calls on both parties to step back from the brink. We call on the Council to help them bring this catastrophe to an end.

To the Palestinians, we say that the use of suicide bombers against innocents is intolerable, a perversion of all religious faiths, an offence against humanity and a tactic that is never acceptable, including in resistance to occupation. Employing children as instruments of war to target the innocent is a moral outrage, and it must stop. Chairman Arafat and those in positions of authority who fail to prevent such practices bear the gravest personal and political responsibility. The world sees condemnations after the fact for the empty gestures they are.

To Israel, we say that Canada fully recognizes Israel's right to exist within secure and recognized borders and its right to self-defence against terrorist acts. We nonetheless consider that continuing Israeli incursions into Palestinian towns and cities feed the spiral of violence. The physical destruction of civilian infrastructure and the mounting toll of killed and injured is putting peace and normal life progressively further out of reach for ordinary people on both sides. Impeding humanitarian access only adds to the mounting bitterness. Canada calls for the prompt withdrawal of Israeli troops from Ramallah and other Palestinian-controlled areas, as called for by Security Council resolution 1402 (2002).

Ongoing Israeli settlement construction undermines any hope for re-establishing a peace process and erodes trust. We call on Israel to end this destabilizing action. In the interest of peace, it must stop.

For the Israelis and for the Palestinians, neither the status quo ante nor the status quo is acceptable. It appears, nevertheless, that the Palestinians and the Israelis are unable to end this conflict and to develop a new modus vivendi on their own. There is already disturbing evidence that the violence is metastasizing well beyond Israel and the West Bank and Gaza. The international community must help the parties find an exit strategy from the spiral of violence and a political road map to peace. Grievances are deepening and will poison relations for generations to come.

The tools are already in hand; they must be applied without delay. The Tenet plan, the Mitchell report and the Arab League's endorsement of Crown Prince Abdullah's initiative together provide elements of such a road map back from the abyss. The international community must do all in its power to bring the parties back to the negotiating table they left 14 months ago and to resume the quest for a political solution.

We all know what the outcome must be.

How many innocent people must die or be maimed physically and psychologically before reason again prevails?

Let us all take to heart, though, the Secretary-General's words spoken in Beirut: "In the desperate search for peace, we should never lose hope" (*Press release SG/T/2318*).

Peace in the Middle East is everyone's business. Let the members of the Council commit themselves to work indefatigably to stop the spiral of violence. Let us all, in our own ways, commit ourselves to supporting the parties in decisively stemming the bloodshed and definitively stilling this conflict.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Mr. Louis Papa Fall, to whom the Council extended an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Fall (*spoke in French*): Seized by a vindictive and destructive fury, the occupying Power has plunged into wanton, systematic reprisals, buttressed by a mad all-security and all-military policy. The catastrophic toll has been countless dead, Israelis and for the most part Palestinians, under a ghastly deluge of air raids, bombardments, terrorist attacks and wanton murders or targeted assassinations. The surrealistic and monolithic option of unjustified collective punishment has failed, despite the obvious connivance of hard-liners in both camps, paradoxically united in their apocalyptic vision of a general conflagration spreading beyond the Middle East.

The Israeli forces have thus entered a new stage in the escalation of violence and illegal repression with military offensives launched against the headquarters of the President of the Palestinian Authority, who has been confined in a tiny space in Ramallah and whose physical integrity is even threatened, notwithstanding the recognized international status conferred upon President Arafat.

It is therefore a matter of urgency that the international community act immediately. The Security Council has just reacted by adopting resolutions 1397 (2002), of 12 March, and 1402 (2002), of 30 March, which stress using the peace process to find a political settlement in the wake of the exercise of good offices by the Arabs, Africans, Americans, European and others — who have committed themselves to rescue the situation through the Mitchell and Tenet plans intended to resurrect the peace process on the basis of the principle of normalization for total withdrawal, which was endorsed by the recent Arab Summit held in Beirut on the welcome initiative by Saudi Arabia. Given the rapidly worsening of the situation due to acts of terror, provocation, destruction and suicide bombings — acts that the Committee strongly and without exception condemns — through me, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People would like to state its position, a position of which I know you, Mr. President, are particularly mindful.

The path to peace is basically dependent on the end of this relentless Israeli occupation, which has gone on for 35 years. It also depends on the creation of an independent, viable Palestinian State co-existing with the State of Israel within secure and internationally guaranteed borders, in keeping with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), from which resolution 1397 (2002) stems — a resolution that broke a taboo in the Council's vocabulary by proclaiming, with rare clarity, the Promethean vision of a Palestinian State.

It follows that the conclusion of a just and lasting settlement based on those resolutions and on General Assembly resolution 194 (III) remains inseparable from the question of Jerusalem as an open city that is the capital of two States, Israel and Palestine, as well as on the question of a just and fair solution to the problem of refugees and their right to return. As the Palestinian question is so central to any lasting solution to the conflict in the Middle East, the United Nations has a sacred duty to continue to exercise its full responsibility with regard to this question until an effective comprehensive solution is found pursuant to the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

It is for that reason that the parties to the conflict, and Tel Aviv in particular, are strongly required to abide by the Geneva Convention relating to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 1949. To that end, our Committee demands international protection, deployment of a United Nations interposition force, and/or the immediate dispatch of international observers. We also urge donors to mobilize urgent humanitarian relief and economic assistance to be directed to Palestinian victims.

In that context, when it comes to moving towards peace the Council is called upon to break the vicious cycle of violence and recurring attacks in order to explore innovative approaches and new ideas such as those so wisely advocated by the Secretary-General, of which resolution 1397 (2002) represents the most significant milestone prior to the holding of the Arab Summit in Beirut. It is vital that a two-fold precondition precede the implementation of such a strategy. I am referring to the immediate withdrawal of Israeli troops from occupied Palestinian cities, including Ramallah, and Tel Aviv's total and unconditional restoration of freedom of movement to President Arafat, to whom our Committee pays tribute for the courage, calm and leadership he has

demonstrated in the face of adversity, with a fierce will for peace and negotiation.

We would like to reiterate our congratulations to you, Mr. President, as well as to your distinguished predecessor, the Ambassador of Norway. I am particularly grateful for this opportunity to participate in the work of the Council and to see at first hand the expression of active solidarity which the Council, in addition to its constant support to the peace process, reiterates to the innocent Palestinian and Israeli people, as well as to all the peoples of the region.

Following the historic Arab Summit held in Beirut — which, in endorsing resolution 1397 (2002), also endorsed the innovative approaches spoken of by the Secretary-General in an effort to catalyse and channel international peace efforts — our Committee welcomed the determined commitment and ongoing efforts of Mr. Kofi Annan and his Special Coordinator, as well as those of the American, European and Russian special envoys to find a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the governing principles of land for peace and normalization for total withdrawal.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Fall for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Wehbe (Syria) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic would like to express its heartfelt gratitude for the understanding of the members of the Council in responding quickly to convene this open meeting at the request of the Arab Group and the caucus of the Non-Aligned Movement.

This meeting has been convened to discuss the tragedy that is unfolding by the minute in the Palestinian territories as a result of the barbaric and bloody Israeli invasion. The world has come to realize that the Israeli Prime Minister and his officials and army generals — who have made murder, destruction and hatred their profession — are trying to hide behind the pretext of combating terrorism. This is a failed attempt to justify the scorched-earth and genocidal policies that are being systematically pursued by the Israelis. The primary objective of those policies is the continued Israeli occupation of Arab lands and the stifling of the aspirations of the Palestinian people to build their independent State on their land, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The international community expects that these continuous meetings of the Security Council will be able to put an end to Israel's arrogance and its violations of the most basic rules of international law and international humanitarian law, and the Fourth Geneva Convention in particular.

Despite the fact that the Security Council has adopted numerous resolutions in recent years, months and even days, it has become clear that Israeli defiance of these resolutions and this legitimacy knows no end. It has also become evident that the authority vested in the Security Council in particular, in the Charter and in the United Nations as a whole is being continuously violated. This confirms the view — widely held among our peoples and countries — that selectivity and double standards on the part of the Security Council are the order of the day whenever the Council is called on to condemn Israel's policies and its continuous flouting of the Council's resolutions and authority, or its trampling of international law and international legitimacy.

We do not believe that our delegation needs to describe the impact on international peace and security of the current situation in the occupied Arab territories and in the Middle East region. By continuing its aggression and its declared war against the Palestinian people, Israel is pursuing a policy of genocide, destroying everything in the path of its tanks, and mercilessly shelling Palestinian civilians, their homes and their infrastructure.

Has the Council seen how the Palestinians have had to bury the bodies of their fallen victims and their martyrs in a mass grave in a parking lot? Has the Council heard about the family that has yet to bury one of its members, who was beheaded by the Israelis? This is but a drop in the sea. In addition, many Red Cross and Red Crescent officials have been killed, and ambulances have been prevented from reaching the injured.

The Israeli army, under instructions from Sharon, has imposed curfews on the Palestinians for days at a time. Water and electricity have been cut off and thousands of Palestinians detained. The houses of refugees who had already been displaced several times were demolished arbitrarily. Examples abound of the carnage committed by Israel against defenceless Palestinian civilians, who have been deprived of any protection. They are attacked and left to bleed to death.

Pregnant women are not spared; some of them miscarried or gave birth at checkpoints.

We do not believe that we need to repeat here the story of Bethlehem, the city of peace and the birthplace of Christ. It has been attacked, along with its churches and its mosques. The Church of the Nativity has been under siege, and a statue of the Virgin Mary has been destroyed.

Against this backdrop, it should be clear to everyone that Israel is openly pursuing a policy of State terrorism, including killing, destruction, assassination and detention. Israel wants to mislead the world regarding its acts of aggression by committing such acts under the guise of self-defence. The fact of the matter is that Israel is trying to defend its occupation of Arab lands, and attempting to impose its conditions on the Palestinian side by force.

The message that the Council should send to the Israeli Government is the following: withdraw immediately from the Palestinian territories, lift the siege imposed on the Palestinian President and the Palestinian leadership and put an end to the killing of innocent civilians.

The Council is well aware that the Arab States unanimously adopted a peace initiative at the Beirut Summit. If Israel backed down from its position rejecting the initiative and if it put an end to its acts of aggression, the road would become clear for the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace; then an independent Palestinian state would be a reality and not a mere dream.

My delegation, on behalf of the Arab Group, will submit a draft resolution on the implementation of previous Council resolutions. The Chairman of the Arab Group has already transmitted the draft text to you, Mr. President. The Arab Group hopes that the Council will adopt the draft resolution, because it believes in the role of the United Nations — represented here by the Security Council — in the realization of stability and security in the Middle East region.

In conclusion, let me say that, even as we meet here to put an end to the Israeli aggression and to call for the withdrawal of the Israeli occupation forces, dozens of Israeli tanks have started to occupy the city of Nablus — a city of more than 120,000 people, now that Israel has completed the occupation of the city of Jenin.

That is the situation following the adoption of the Security Council resolutions. What should the Council do now? We have submitted a draft resolution in blue. I urge all my colleagues in the Council to support the draft resolution, which simply reaffirms the call for the implementation of resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002).

Mr. Rivas (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is clear that the international community is increasingly concerned at the continuation of the violence in the Middle East. That is the reason for this new debate, despite the fact that the Security Council took a stance on the matter just a few days ago.

Yesterday the members of the Security Council held a very intensive dialogue with the representatives of Israel and of the Palestinian Authority. In that dialogue, we reiterated our concern in the face of the ongoing violence. If we do not succeed in stopping that violence, we run the risk of its spreading to the entire region.

President Arafat's security is also a source of great concern to the Colombian delegation. Although the Government of Israel has said that its intention is not to harm him, it is clear that the situation is extremely risky.

Furthermore, we deem incomprehensible and unacceptable the proposal made by the Prime Minister of Israel that President Arafat should leave Palestine to go into exile. It should not be forgotten that Mr. Arafat is the elected President of the Palestinian Authority and that as such he is the internationally recognized leader of the Palestinian people. We add our voice to the call for Israel to end immediately its siege of President Arafat.

The Security Council has adopted two important resolutions in less than a month, 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002), without achieving the desired results so far. It is urgent that the parties comply with the two resolutions immediately, since they are the only way out of the current impasse.

We wish to reiterate the appeal to both parties for an immediate ceasefire, for Israel's withdrawal from the Palestinian cities and for an end to the suicide attacks in the Israeli cities. The military occupation will not provide the security guarantees that Israel is

seeking, nor will the suicide attacks achieve the political results desired by the Palestinians. We also wish to reiterate our support for the Tenet plan and the Mitchell recommendations.

The Security Council's efforts complement the efforts being made on the ground by the various special envoys. We reiterate our support for their work, which requires the cooperation and full compliance of both parties. There is no reason for limiting the special envoys' access to dialogue with President Arafat.

The Arab Summit in Beirut finished a few days ago. It offered a ray of hope for finding a solution to this conflict. These new proposals must be studied. As the Secretary-General mentioned, the security concerns of Israel and the political aspirations of the Palestinians must be taken into account simultaneously. Security and peace are two sides of the same coin.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): Ireland associates itself fully with the earlier intervention of Spain, which was made on behalf of the European Union.

As the Council is aware, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the European Union member States held an extraordinary meeting in Luxembourg this evening. I would like to draw attention to the important statement made to the press afterward by Foreign Minister Piqué of Spain to the effect that the European Union Ministers are in agreement that the most urgent requirement is the implementation — immediately and in their entirety — of resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002). This very night, Foreign Minister Piqué and High Representative Solana are travelling to the region with the objective of meeting at the highest level with the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

Ireland shares the grave concern of the Secretary-General at the further aggravation of the situation on the ground. We commend the clarity of the Secretary-General's public statement of last Monday and the leadership that he is showing at this very difficult time. We strongly support what he has said. This is not a time for the Security Council to take one side or the other. Truly, in the current situation there is a great deal of right and a great deal of wrong on all sides. It is for the Council to help the parties get out of the current crisis. They are incapable of doing so unassisted, embedded as they are in impasse.

In welcoming the adoption of resolution 1402 (2002) last Saturday, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland, Mr. Brian Cowen, made a strong appeal for the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority to implement immediately and in full the terms of the resolution and to respond to the wider appeals of the international community. He said there can be no justification for further killings or hostile actions which serve to deepen hatred between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. The peace and security of Israel and a free and independent State of Palestine can be secured through political negotiations alone. The policy of violence, coercion and revenge which currently prevails will lead only to further unnecessary grief and suffering. Mr. Cowen went on to say that the Security Council is acting on behalf of the international community in pointing the way to the resolution of this crisis. Israeli and Palestinian leaders must grasp this opportunity and work together to overcome those who would seek to perpetuate the conflict between their peoples.

We are greatly disappointed, and we cannot accept that even on the same day when resolution 1402 (2002) was adopted, key elements of the resolution were downplayed and even repudiated. Since then, the situation has deteriorated further. Let me add that it is no virtue for any party to state that it has "not rejected" resolution 1402 (2002). Member States of the United Nations are, under the Charter, required to implement resolutions of the Council.

Again, we condemn unreservedly the murder of civilians by suicide bombings. Equally, we call for an end to Israel's military attack on Ramallah and other Palestinian towns, and we condemn unreservedly the violations of international humanitarian law and of United Nations conventions that have accompanied it. We call for an immediate end to Israel's siege of President Arafat, which is deeply dangerous and unwise. We reject outright any intention to oblige the elected leader of the Palestinian people to re-enter exile. We deplore all violations of the blue line between Lebanon and Israel. Ireland deeply deplores widespread denials of human rights, including, first and foremost, the right to life of Palestinians and Israelis alike.

The overall context for forward movement is clearly set out in resolution 1397 (2002). The elements for immediate progress are clear. These are crystallized in paragraph 1 of resolution 1402 (2002). Every member of the Council expressly declared through the Council President on 30 March that no sequence is

implied or required in the implementation of these elements. We agree with the Secretary-General that we need to take into account the legitimate security concerns of Israel and the legitimate political aspirations of the Palestinians at the same time.

There is a need to encourage most strongly the continuing efforts of the "quartet". An even-handed, sustained and determined engagement on the part of the "quartet" — which is comprised of envoys of the Secretary-General, the President of the United States, the European Union and the Russian Federation — is central and crucial. The "quartet" may in the deteriorating circumstances need strengthening on the ground at the political level. It would be unconscionable and unacceptable if the "quartet" or members of it were to continue to be prevented from meeting with President Arafat. We call on all parties to cooperate fully with the efforts of the "quartet".

We agree with the Secretary-General that the question of deploying a third party on the ground deserves to be further examined. It is, of course, crucial that the Council maintain its active engagement with the current crisis. The international community expects and deserves no less. We should continue to receive regular briefings from the Secretary-General in the light of reports from his Special Coordinator.

The Government of Ireland, for its part, has been in direct touch with Secretary-General Annan and both sides in recent days, and we will continue to do our utmost within the means available to us nationally, as a member of the European Union, and here in the Security Council to help deliver the parties and the region from the current catastrophe.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom's position is fully contained in the statement made by Spain on behalf of the European Union (EU), and there is no need for me to add more words to that admirably clear position, which is entirely consonant with the strong stance taken by the Secretary-General.

There is nevertheless one point in particular which I feel I need to emphasize. Resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002) are significant developments of Security Council policy on this issue. The deliberate use of violence and, in particular, the unproductive and unacceptable escalation in the degree of force used by the Israeli Defence Force, have got to be brought to a halt. The Israeli forces must quickly withdraw from Ramallah and other West Bank towns. Likewise, Palestinian suicide bombings, which are undoubtedly acts of terror, must cease, and the Palestinian Authority must make a 100-per-cent effort to that end.

I believe that the whole Security Council is clear that there can be no military solution. Israelis and Palestinians alike have the right to security. But this can be secured only by a peaceful settlement, negotiated between the parties. President Arafat and the Palestinian Authority are the legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people, with whom Israel must be able to resume that dialogue. It is not in the interests of peace — or, I submit, of Israel — to weaken their capacity.

These two resolutions have to be implemented; they are routes out of the desperate position into which the two sides have got themselves. They provide, succinctly and forcefully, the basis for real peace. The whole United Nations system should be directed to implementation. In our national diplomacy, the United Kingdom will play its part; so will the EU, collectively.

As Ambassador Ryan just mentioned earlier, a high-level delegation of the EU is leaving for the region now, with the intention of meeting the leaders of both sides, to encourage the immediate cessation of the violence and the implementation of the resolutions. They and other active negotiators within the "quartet" have the basis for action in resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002) — which need no further interpretation — and in the conclusions of the Arab League Summit. We should be doing everything to facilitate their practical work on the ground.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): I have not been present in this Chamber throughout the debate that began this morning, but I have been watching and listening to all the speeches on television in my office. Having listened to the speeches all day long, I believe that a very strong message has clearly come through the debate and the discussion today. The strong message is that the international community is deeply concerned about the situation in the region, and that we, the members of the Security Council, cannot and should not underestimate the gravity of the situation that we are facing.

Since the adoption of resolution 1402 (2002) in the early hours of 30 March — it is barely five days old now — the situation on the ground in the Middle East has not improved. The parties have not moved

anywhere near to a meaningful ceasefire. Israeli troops have not been withdrawn from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah. While the United States Special Envoy, Anthony Zinni, and others, including members of the "quartet", continue to be engaged on the ground, acts of violence continue, including acts of terror, provocation and incitement. There have also been worrying developments along the Blue Line — a situation which bears careful watching.

The parties are, to quote the Secretary-General, who briefed the Council members on Monday, "locked into the logic of war". In mentioning the Secretary-General, I think that it is important for us to recognize that he has shown unusual leadership in telling the Security Council that it cannot ignore the situation there.

The consequences of being locked into that logic of war is that the region, which is already poised at the edge of an abyss, might tip over into it — although some, of course, say that we have already fallen into it. We might find the parties free-falling in that abyss, the depth of which is not yet known. The international community, including the Security Council, has been toiling for months to find ways and means of preventing the parties from tumbling into the abyss. Resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002) are two lifelines that have been extended in good faith to both parties for them to use to extract themselves from the lose-lose situation in which they find themselves today. They should be read together; resolution 1397 (2002) provides the long-term vision — indeed, a clear long-term vision — while resolution 1402 (2002) lays down the immediate steps required.

However, at the end of the day, it will be up to the parties to decide whether they will reach out for the lifelines to pull themselves out of the abyss, and find a win-win solution. But that can be done only on the basis of a negotiated political settlement.

The focus of today's meeting is therefore to see how those two resolutions — 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002) — can be implemented. We listened carefully to the views expressed earlier by non-members of the Council. As for the Security Council, as a first step, the Council presidency issued two press statements — one of them on Monday, 1 April 2002 — demanding the immediate implementation of those resolutions. As it is ultimately the responsibility of the parties to implement Security Council resolutions, the Council presidency was tasked to meet with the parties to convey the demand directly. That task was promptly carried out by you, Mr. President.

In addition, the Security Council met separately with the Permanent Representative of Israel and with the Permanent Observer of Palestine in private meetings yesterday, during which Council members made it abundantly clear that resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002) offer the best instrument for the parties to get out of the rut that they are in today. Indeed, I might add that in some ways it may have been unfortunate that non-members were not present to listen to the discussions that we had yesterday in this Chamber, because, truly, we had remarkably frank and candid discussions. It is our hope that both parties listened carefully to what was said to them in the private meetings here, barely 24 hours ago. All of us stressed that the actions required by paragraph 1 of resolution 1402 (2002) are not sequential, and have to be implemented immediately.

With that in mind, we would like to remind the parties that, under Article 25 of the United Nations Charter, Members of the United Nations agreed to accept and carry out decisions of the Security Council. That Article makes no distinction between decisions adopted under Chapter VI and Chapter VII of the Charter. We hope that these cumulative steps will make it clear that the Council expects full and immediate compliance with the resolutions by the parties. If the parties need external help, members of the "quartet" and other international mediators, and certainly the good offices of the Secretary-General, stand ready, either individually or collectively, to facilitate the implementation.

Indeed, as we know, there is no lack of mediators or of political initiatives, the most significant of which is the Arab peace initiative adopted recently at the Summit meeting of the League of Arab States in Beirut. At this stage, what we need to do is to consolidate these various initiatives and go back to familiar ground, such as the Oslo peace agreement, the more recent negotiations at Camp David in 2000 and the subsequent discussions in Taba, as well as the Tenet work plan and the Mitchell report.

In each of those agreements, Yasser Arafat, a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize together with the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the elected leader of the Palestinian people, has been a pivotal

player. Steps should be taken to allow him to take the measures requested of him by the Security Council. Clearly, leadership is required on both sides. In order to bring the Middle East back to the path of peace, one side should not be prevented from exercising its leadership.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): As a country associated with the European Union, Bulgaria fully supports the statement made earlier by the representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union.

Bulgaria, like all other members of the Council and of the United Nations as a whole, is concerned by the worsening of the situation in the Middle East. We call upon the parties to the crisis to exercise restraint. That restraint should be exercised not only through acts but also through language. Sometimes linguistic or rhetorical excesses can be as dangerous and harmful as actions.

My country believes that resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002) represent a clear and unequivocal road map to resolve the current crisis. Those Council resolutions provide a solid basis for action by all who are engaged on the ground to help resolve the crisis. I am thinking in particular of the Special Envoy of President Bush, General Zinni; the Special Envoy of the European Union, Mr. Moratinos; Terry Larsen; Mr. Vdovine; and others. My country welcomes the decision just taken by the European Union to dispatch to the region the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain, Mr. Piqué, and the European Union's High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Mr. Solana.

Bulgaria calls upon Israel to implement resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002) and to put an end to the isolation of President Arafat and to the danger to his physical integrity. We are concerned by information we have received concerning difficulties that prominent representatives of the international community are having in contacting President Arafat, who remains the legitimate leader of the Palestinian people. We read in the press that the current President of the European Union himself, the Prime Minister of Spain, Mr. José María Aznar, was prevented from having a telephone conversation with President Arafat. If that is the case, we protest strongly against such an action on the part of the Israeli authorities.

Terrorist attacks represent a major source of the current tension in the region. They have continued since the adoption of the two resolutions. Bulgaria condemns them unequivocally. They are inexcusable, not only from a moral point of view but also from a political standpoint. It is undeniable that they have introduced into the conflict an element that is irrational and inhuman from every perspective. They have done so to an unprecedented extent in this already ghastly conflict. Such acts of suicide represent a phenomenon with grave consequences. What really disgusts us is that they are very often encouraged by political leaders.

I would like to say this very clearly: the culture of the glorification of sacrifice must go, not only for the moral reasons that I just mentioned, but also for political reasons. Quite simply, such acts do not help the Palestinian cause. The Palestinian people is being called to live with the Israeli people. I cannot resist the temptation to cite the eminent nineteenth-century statesman and diplomat Talleyrand, who, when referring to a political assassination, said it was worse than a crime — it was a mistake. Unfortunately, however, that is the case here.

Mr. Negroponte (United States of America): Today, the Security Council meets again to consider the situation in the Middle East. When many of us left New York for Monterrey for the International Conference on Financing for Development just over two weeks ago, there was cause for guarded optimism. The Security Council had just passed resolution 1397 (2002), Crown Prince Abdullah had begun to lay out his bold vision for peace, and both parties had welcomed General Zinni's return to the region. Now, two weeks later, we are faced with a terrible crisis. As Secretary Powell said yesterday morning, both sides are losing right now, and it is time to find a way forward.

My Government is committed to working with the parties to find a way forward. Just last month President Bush stated, "We have an obligation to work for peace in the region, and we will." We have been working for peace at the highest levels — in Washington, through General Zinni, through our embassies in the region and, where appropriate, through the United Nations Security Council. Ultimately, however, the United States believes that there is no military solution to the current impasse.

Palestinian aspirations are not being advanced through terror and violence. And long-term security and peace for Israel cannot be achieved by military means. We are also concerned by the violent incidents taking place on Israel's northern border, instigated by Hezbollah and Palestinian elements. These incidents are clear violations of the "blue line" and further aggravate the regional situation.

The United States has been supportive of a constructive Security Council role during this crisis. We introduced resolution 1397 (2002), which affirmed a political vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, within secure and recognized borders and called for a cessation of violence and terror. We voted in support of resolution 1402 (2002), which called for an immediate ceasefire, the withdrawal of Israeli forces and a return to the Tenet work plan, which is the first step towards implementation of the Mitchell Committee's recommendations. Mitchell, in turn, rapidly gets us into a political process and negotiations, as Secretary Powell has said.

We are working around the clock with both sides to secure the implementation of resolution 1402 (2002) in its entirety. Through resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002), the Council has laid out the road map. We would urge the parties to engage immediately in the implementation of these provisions.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Norway remains deeply alarmed by the escalating cycle of violence in the Middle East. The terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians and the Israeli military campaign represent a dramatic worsening of the situation.

Norway is fully aligned with what Secretary-General Annan has described as the "core problems" — that is, occupation, violence, including terrorism, and the economic plight of the Palestinians. Unless these problems are addressed, the conflict will only escalate further. Norway also agrees with the Secretary-General that the issues of security and peace are two sides of the same coin, and these two issues must be addressed in parallel in the spirit of Security Council resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002).

Norway has repeatedly condemned Palestinian terrorist attacks. Terrorism is not acceptable as a tool to reach political goals. We call on the Palestinian people to renounce terrorism and disassociate themselves from the practices of extremist groups.

However, the ongoing Israeli military campaign against the Palestinian Authority is destroying the Palestinian police and its ability to fight terrorism. We fear that the present military operations will only breed further hatred and continued terrorist attacks. Israel's military campaign and use of lethal force, especially in civilian-populated areas, is not going to achieve its aim. Such use of force will bring neither peace nor security, but it will fuel hatred and despair. The campaign must be brought to an end immediately.

The Israeli siege of President Arafat's compound in Ramallah is another matter of concern. The treatment of Mr. Arafat, the democratically elected leader of the Palestinians, is unacceptable and can only contribute to complicating the possibility for finding any political solution. President Arafat has minimal opportunity to act in the present situation. His ability to function as the leader of the Palestinian Authority must be restored immediately. Without that happening, no process to lead us out of the present dire situation can be found.

The humanitarian situation in the Palestinian area must also be addressed. Reports about violations of international humanitarian law resulting from the recent military campaign are very disturbing. Norway calls on Israel to immediately lift restrictions on movement of humanitarian personnel and medical relief. We are also concerned about the safety of journalists covering recent developments.

The present escalation of the conflict has a clear potential to threaten regional peace and security. Norway therefore calls on Israel and the Palestinians to immediately cease the fighting. Norway remains convinced that only the resumption of a political process can bring a lasting solution and peace to Israelis and Palestinians. The Security Council has indicated the way forward through resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002). The international community and this Council must stand united in its demand that these measures be implemented.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): France fully aligns itself with the statement made by the Ambassador of Spain on behalf of the European Union.

Since the adoption of resolution 1402 (2002), violence has escalated even further in the Middle East. The military operations undertaken by the Israeli army in Ramallah, and later in other Palestinian towns, are

leading to a political impasse and a humanitarian tragedy. This situation in unacceptable.

France strongly urges that both parties fully implement resolution 1402 (2002) without delay. The Israeli army must withdraw from all Palestinian towns, and military operations under way must cease. Equally, all forms of violence and terror must cease. A real ceasefire between Palestinians and Israelis should be concluded without delay. France reaffirms what was stated by the President of the Security Council on behalf of the 15 members: the demands contained in resolution 1402 (2002) are not in a sequence and should all be fully implemented.

In order to emerge from this vicious cycle of violence and hatred it is necessary to have a political perspective. The situation can improve only when the Israeli Government agrees to undertake, in parallel to discussions on security, political negotiations leading to the creation of an independent, viable and democratic Palestinian State. Security issues and political issues must be addressed; they cannot be separated.

France states once again, and forcefully, that nothing can justify the murder of innocent civilians. The suicide bombings that have taken place over the past few days lead to a feeling of disgust. France condemns them with horror. Once again, we express our compassion and our deep sympathy to all the victims and their families.

The Palestinian Authority, which has the responsibility to combat terrorism, can act only if its capacities are preserved and if it is not weakened. This implies, notably for the Israeli Government, the lifting of the siege of Ramallah and the re-establishment of President Arafat's abilities to take action, travel and negotiate. The physical integrity and personal safety of the President of the Palestinian Authority must be assured. To exile him would be a mistake, with incalculable consequences.

The neutralizing of President Arafat and, to a larger extent, the dismantling of the Palestinian Authority and its security infrastructures run counter to Israel's sought-after objective. The long-term security of the Israeli people does not come through the destruction of the Palestinian Authority but, on the contrary, through negotiation with the elected and legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people.

Our Council should be fully aware of the very serious humanitarian consequences of the Israeli military operations. They inflict new trials on the Palestinian people, who are victim to a blockade and are being gradually deprived of the most elementary means of subsistence. The restrictions imposed on the activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other medical and humanitarian institutions are unacceptable. Equally unacceptable are the repeated violations of the right to consular access for nationals of third States in danger.

For a long time France has been in favour of deploying international observers. It proposed this idea in this Chamber 18 months ago. The present circumstances, tragically, lend increased relevance to this proposal. The presence of these monitors would serve the interests of the Israeli population as well as of the Palestinian population. This proposal, which is increasingly supported, could complement the proposals of General Zinni and assist in the implementation of the Tenet and Mitchell plans. It would facilitate the resumption of political negotiations by contributing to a return to calm. The Secretary-General rightly emphasized that this idea should be placed at the forefront of the work of the Security Council. Perhaps we should go even beyond that and give serious consideration to deploying an interposition force to accompany the implementation of the Security Council resolutions. The question deserves to be posed from now on.

The situation poses a considerable risk to the entire region. France is extremely concerned by the renewal of tensions observed on the border between Lebanon and Israel. In a presidential statement of 18 June 2000, the Security Council confirmed that Israel had withdrawn from Lebanon. Recent attacks originating from Lebanese territory are unacceptable. Any violation of the blue line, in either direction, should cease. France calls on all parties involved to demonstrate the greatest possible restraint.

France encourages the diplomatic efforts being made by all, and particularly those of the "quartet". The "quartet" must have access to President Arafat. It should be able to play its full role, in unity and in the service of peace. We hope that the United States will once again become involved further in the search for a solution to the conflict. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the European Union met in Luxembourg to examine the means that would make it possible to

escape the spiral of violence and restore the conditions for a resumption of dialogue. As my European colleagues have indicated, our Ministers have decided to immediately dispatch to the region Mr. Pique, Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs, on behalf of the European Union, and Mr. Solana, the High Representative, to meet with President Arafat and Prime Minister Sharon and to demand the immediate implementation of resolution 1402 (2002). The efforts of all must converge towards our common objective: a halt to the confrontations and the resumption of negotiations.

In two weeks the Security Council has adopted two important texts, resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002). These two resolutions show the way towards a de-escalation, ceasefire and resumption of political talks. There are no other paths towards peace.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank you for having convened this meeting at the request of the States of the Arab League and the member States of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Given the worsening of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, the succession of meetings of the Security Council reflects the hope that the international community places in our body. The community hopes and expects of us that we quickly and decisively contribute to halting the violence in Israel and Palestine. The role of the Council should be decisive in helping to promote the resumption of peace negotiations between Israel and Palestine.

Allow me to convey a few words to the international community as a whole and to you, Ambassadors of Member States. It is quite natural that the events of recent weeks elicit powerful feelings. I am in a good position to know this. I am firmly convinced that life that is lost is a tragedy and that the life of any human being is of the same value as anybody else's. My thoughts and my prayers go to the families and to the communities that are suffering today on either side. I want to see an end put to violence and the peace process resumed.

This is how Secretary-General Kofi Annan expressed himself when he reported back to the General Assembly on 20 October 2000 on his mission to the Middle East. His words haunt me, and while we face this extremely tense situation, Cameroon is speaking in the framework of this Council meeting, which is of particularly decisive importance. I am aware that more than ever before, words can stir up or calm feelings, and that the return to calm and tranquillity is a precondition for a climate that would facilitate a resumption of the peace talks.

On 29 and 30 March of this year we had an intense debate, which made it possible for us to tackle head-on, as far as possible, the delicate and complex situation prevailing in the Middle East, which verges on being frozen, or even deadlocked. Thanks to the effectiveness and the tact of your predecessor, Sir, we managed to adopt resolution 1402 (2002), which is the best road map towards a political, final solution advocated in resolution 1397 (2002).

In that resolution, the Council puts its finger on the problem. The Council has said that it was seriously concerned because of the worsening situation in the Middle East. This worsening of the situation has two basic causes: the recent suicide bombings carried out in Israel, and the military offensive conducted against the headquarters of the President of the Palestinian Authority. That is the crux of the matter, and that is why the Council calls for an immediate ceasefire, the withdrawal from the cities under siege and the cessation of all violence and terror.

This resolution is crucial, and only compliance with it can halt the escalation of violence and make it possible to safeguard the peace dynamic. This dynamic, re-launched by the adoption of resolution 1397 (2002) and recognizing the need for coexistence in the region, side by side, of two States, Israel and Palestine, within secure recognized borders, was reinforced through the unequivocal expression by the Arab countries of their willingness to live with Israel and to recognize it, according to the Saudi Arabian peace plan, which was approved at the most recent Arab League Summit.

The parties must not hide behind semantics. The question of a sequential implementation of the relevant provisions of resolution 1402 (2002) should not be an obstacle in the implementation of that resolution.

A little more than three months ago the United Nations and its Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, received the Nobel Peace Prize. Today the Middle East is a real challenge to peace, a problem for the United Nations, particularly for the Security Council, which since 29 March 2002 has been holding at least one

meeting a day on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

The decisions that we take, as well as our capacity and determination to implement them, are for the international community, States, public opinion and the media a decisive indicator of the credibility and the capacity, for action of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace. At this time all these observers who welcomed with hope and enthusiasm resolution 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002) are now wondering about the tragic developments on the ground. Hence, the Council must explore all avenues to lead the parties to abide by these resolutions, to help the parties renounce the logic of war and to return to the peace process. We must salute the role played by the American, European, Russian and United Nations envoys to try to reweave the strands of dialogue.

The current situation, however, requires that we do more than that, that we create an electric shock to stop the escalation of violence so that Israelis and Palestinians can quickly put an end to the current cycle of violence and reprisals that plunge them into a bottomless abyss. That was the thrust of the broad-based, candid and in-depth dialogue that we had yesterday with the representative of Israel and the Permanent Observer of Palestine.

Is it not high time that the United Nations, through the Security Council, go beyond that and really engage directly in the peace process in the Middle East? I believe in this regard that the Secretary-General and a delegation of the Council, possibly at the ministerial level, could very soon go to the region to stop the spiral of violence and to re-launch the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. The context requires this. Indeed, as of today the climate is explosive everywhere. The risk of an uncontrollable situation is all too real. The parties are deeply distrustful of each other. The language they use unfortunately is the language of war. Hence, the proposal to dispatch a mission is becoming highly relevant now. Pending the dispatch of such a mission, Cameroon is open to any strong, balanced initiative that the Council might take right now.

It is clear that the success of our action is possible only if we all speak with one voice in the Council and if we are united and coordinated. Peace in the Middle East will be the fruit of our solidarity, solidarity that brings efforts and forces together. But Cameroon has always supported this point, and we restate it again today; the reign of peace will come in the Middle East when the Israelis and the Palestinians decide to be the builders and inventors. We have always said this and we restate this point today. Peace has to be invented first in the heart of man and in our relations with each other. Inventing peace means working for a just, fraternal, secure and peaceful society.

Inhabitants of Palestine, Israelis and Palestinians, become the inventors of peace, of your peace, of this peace that you always call "Shalom/Salaam", which for you precisely represents the state of people living in harmony with each other and with nature.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Since the Security Council adopted resolution 1402 (2002) on 30 March, the conflict between Israel and Palestine has continued to escalate. Instead of improving, the situation has deteriorated further. In particular, the economic and social life of the Palestinian people has been seriously disrupted, and the humanitarian situation is in deep crisis. We express our serious concern and worry over these developments.

A resolution to the question of the Middle East can only be based on the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the principle of land for peace. Resorting to military occupation and violence will not bring peace to either side; rather, it will make the road to peace more difficult.

The deterioration of the situation in the Middle East in recent days has proven once again that Israel's approach of achieving security through military high-handedness will go nowhere. It must be pointed out that Israel's continued siege of President Arafat and its threat to force him into exile are very dangerous. Should President Arafat be harmed, the consequences would be extremely grave.

We oppose and condemn Israel's invasion of Palestine, and we call upon Israel to immediately implement resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002), to unconditionally withdraw all its troops from Palestine, to guarantee the personal safety of President Arafat, and to lift the blockade and the relevant restrictions on the Palestinian sides so as to create the necessary conditions for the Palestinian side to be able to stop the extreme and violent activities by a handful of people and to make possible a ceasefire between the two sides.

At the same time, we also condemn the violent activities targeting innocent civilians in Israel. We call for an early end to the vicious cycle of countering violence with violence, so as to prevent extreme and violent activities by a handful of people from disrupting the early restoration of all the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

In the current situation, the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, should play a more active and effective role to avoid the evolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict into an all-out confrontation and to prevent the situation from sliding into an irreparable state. Yesterday, the Council held separate meetings with the Israeli and Palestinian sides. We hope the two sides will take practical steps to immediately stop all violent activities. All peace-loving countries should work together to stop the deterioration of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to promote the momentum for peace in the Middle East.

Mr. Bhuckory (Mauritius): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this public meeting to further discuss the deteriorating situation in the Middle East.

Almost all the speakers who have spoken since this morning agree that there is indeed total despair in the region and that the situation is clearly out of control. We are deeply concerned by the ongoing outrageous Israeli assaults and the reoccupation of Bethlehem, Ramallah and other Palestinian towns. Yet what we fear the most is the turn these events might take in the days ahead. We have said on previous occasions that the military assault by Israel can only be counter-productive. Many other delegations rightly share the same assessment. In a statement made to the National Assembly yesterday, the Foreign Minister of Mauritius commented on the explosive situation in the Middle East and condemned the unprecedented scale of the violence by Israel on the Palestinian Authority and on the Palestinian people. He also condemned the Palestinian suicide bombings.

At the Arab League Summit in Beirut last week, the Arab world extended a hand of friendship to Israel by endorsing the Arab peace initiative of Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah. These proposals have the potential of showing us a real ray of light at the end of the tunnel. They provide a basis for the two parties to engage in a meaningful dialogue with a view to ending the stalemate. It is regrettable that instead of taking advantage of this opportunity, Prime Minister Sharon has further compromised the prospects for peace in the region. The senseless and miscalculated Israeli actions lead us to wonder whether Prime Minister Sharon has any intention of making peace with the Palestinians.

Mauritius reiterates its condemnation of all acts of terror and suicide bombings, especially against innocent civilians. At the same time, it must be emphasized that the Israeli actions in West Bank cannot be justified. In fact, subjecting President Arafat to the worst form of humiliation, besieging him for months, speaking openly about his exile, reoccupying Palestinian towns, destroying all the infrastructure that the Palestinians have built over the years and forcing them to bury their dead inhumanely can only further radicalize and infuriate even the moderate Arab world.

The protests and street demonstrations in various capitals are living proof of the grief and anger of the Arab world. This will no doubt cause a backlash on Israel. It will seriously compromise the vision of the Security Council of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, would live side by side within secure and recognized borders. We fear that the recent hostilities across the blue line are not just a beginning. An Arab world in turmoil would have dire consequences for international peace and security, with eventual disastrous effects on the global economy.

We again emphasize that President Arafat remains the only interlocutor with whom Israel can negotiate peace. We repeat once again that in this difficult situation, he must be strengthened instead of being isolated and marginalized. He is the legitimate leader of the Palestinians. His physical integrity and personal safety must be protected at all costs, and Israel has to unconditionally end the siege on him.

Two weeks ago, the Security Council adopted resolution 1397 (2002), and on Saturday last it adopted resolution 1402 (2002). The Council demanded the immediate cessation of all acts of violence and called for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities. Unfortunately, both these resolutions have been ignored. It is absolutely important for both Palestine and Israel to implement fully these two resolutions and to adhere strictly not only to their letter but also to their spirit.

Before the adoption of resolution 1402 (2002), the Council President clearly stressed the non-sequential nature of the steps outlined in its paragraph 1. It would be intellectually dishonest to claim that a

ceasefire and an end of suicide attacks should precede any pullout from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah. There is clearly no conditionality for an Israeli pullout from Ramallah and other Palestinian cities.

My delegation is ready to support any draft resolution that would reaffirm the Council's demand for the immediate implementation of all provisions contained in resolution 1402 (2002). It is also time for the Security Council to engage in a meaningful discussion on the dispatch of an international observer force in the area that could restore a climate of trust between the two parties.

There are influential world leaders who should be called upon to act in such a difficult situation, and we call upon them to press for an immediate Israeli withdrawal. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has rightly said that security cannot be dealt with in isolation and that it has to be addressed alongside key political and humanitarian issues. Hence, any proposal to address the security concerns and which fails to include steps towards resolving the core political issues will be doomed to fail. The inalienable right of the Palestinian people to statehood based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) should remain central to any initiative. The Palestinian people will never settle for less, nor should the international community.

Mr. Aguilar Zínser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Mexican presidency yesterday expressed its deepest concern over the serious deterioration of the situation in the Middle East and at the continuing lack of implementation of Security Council resolutions. Mexico reiterates its position today that a just and lasting solution to the conflict should be found, based on the implementation of resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002) and strongly supports the concept of a region in which Israel and Palestine coexist side by side within secure and mutually respected borders.

Mexico also endorses the statement made yesterday by the Rio Group that, in keeping with resolution 1402 (2002), both parties proceed immediately with the implementation of a genuine ceasefire and with the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah. It supports the demand contained in resolution 1397 (2002) for an immediate end to all acts of terrorism, provocation, incitement and destruction.

All Security Council resolutions are mandatory for all those involved and in all circumstances, as set out in Article 25 of the Charter. This is not subject to discussion. Nonetheless, despite this obligation, Israel considers that military incursions into Palestinian cities and its virtual siege and kidnapping of the President of the Palestinian National Authority fall within Israel's right to legitimate self-defence.

Mexico believes that, on the contrary, Israel is not acting in accordance with the principles of legitimate self-defence recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. The military actions that Israel is carrying out in the Palestinian territories will not succeed in preventing terrorism. On the contrary, regardless of their military or strategic objectives, the effects and practical consequences of those actions will lead to acts of reprisal and to new extremist actions on the part of the Palestinians.

Israel's military actions in Palestinian territory have involved several acts of aggression against the civilian population, which runs totally counter to international humanitarian law. My delegation therefore can find no legal, moral or political justification for the actions undertaken by Israel in the Palestinian territories.

Mexico — firmly convinced of Israel's right to security and repudiating as abominable acts the suicide bombings of the Palestinians against the Israeli population — calls on Israel to respect international law; immediately to withdraw its troops from Palestinian cities; and to give the President of the Palestinian National Authority, Yasser Arafat, freedom of movement and respect his integrity.

Mexico also calls on the Israeli authorities to cease their military actions against the civilian population. The people of Mexico are friends of the people of Israel, and, on the basis of this friendship, Mexico calls on Israel to place its trust in the United Nations and to have recourse to the Council, seeking here solutions that will lead to a just peace and to the full achievement of its legitimate aspirations to live in an international environment of security and safety.

The Palestinian Authority and its representatives have indicated their willingness to act within the

framework of international law, deeming it the only way to find a just solution to the conflict.

Nonetheless, the suicide bombings that are taking place in Israel are in totally contravention of international law. For that reason, the Palestinian National Authority should therefore demand that these terrorist actions cease, in accordance with the unambiguous provisions of Security Council resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002).

The Palestinian National Authority cannot be ambiguous or ambivalent in the face of a flagrant violation of international law. Mexico believes that President Yasser Arafat should demand the cessation of all of these acts of terrorist violence, as they are contrary to the cause defended by the Palestinian Authority and to the demands that it is making for all parties to respect international law. That message should be transmitted without any ambiguity or ambivalence to the people of Palestine and to all Palestinian organizations. Mexico considers that the Palestinian Authority is also compelled to respect the provisions of international humanitarian law.

The last two resolutions adopted by the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the issue of Palestine, have been ignored. This undermines the credibility of the Council and of the United Nations.

Mexico believes that the Security Council must adopt concrete, specific and effective measures in order for its authority and resolutions to prevail. This meeting of the Security Council is being held in response to the request made by the international community, which is awaiting resolute and effective action by the United Nations to put an end to the escalating violence and terrorism in the Middle East, which is threatening international security.

The Security Council remains actively seized of the issue. Our immediate objective is to ensure, through all of the diplomatic means at our disposal, that the parties involved both implement resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002).

The Security Council is endeavouring to contribute to seeing that the mediating activities of the "quartet" bear fruit very shortly. The declarations made by our President, his meeting with the representatives of Palestine and Israel, and the separate dialogue of the 15 members of the Council yesterday with the Ambassador of Israel and the Ambassador of Palestine have made it very clear to the Government of Israel and of the Palestinian National Authority that the Council is expecting both parties fully to respect and implement the resolutions. This public debate has contributed additional elements to the Council and will help guide its actions.

In these circumstances, Mexico believes that the Council must support the work of the special envoys, particularly of General Zinni; the actions being currently undertaken by representatives of the European Union; and those of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to reach agreement on a ceasefire as soon as possible, as well as to take the political steps necessary to allow for an urgent return to the negotiating table.

Mexico considers that the clearer and better defined the positions of the countries promoting these measures, the more effective their efforts will be. Mexico also considers that the Security Council should now start exploring the role that it will have to play when — as we hope — the ceasefire becomes a reality and the political dialogue is resumed. Among these actions, Mexico proposes that the Security Council explore activities appropriate to the authority conferred upon it by the Charter of the United Nations and which are part of its past experience, such as the observation and monitoring of ceasefires, the establishment of zones of peace, the implementation of disarmament programmes and the collection arms obtained by illicit groups, the verification of security arrangements, the adoption of confidence-building measures, the establishment and protection of violence-free zones and on-the-spot verification of the implementation of agreements and of provisions of international humanitarian law.

Finally, Mexico considers that the Security Council has made very significant progress in its action in the Middle East thanks to the consensus reached among its members. We therefore feel that any future Council action to encourage compliance with its resolutions should be done while maintaining a position of consensus and its unity of action.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Guinea. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Fall (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): My delegation notes and deplores the escalation of violence in the occupied Palestinian territories and in Israel since the Council's adoption on 30 March of resolution 1402 (2002).

Despite the international community's numerous appeals for the prompt implementation of that resolution, the situation continues to deteriorate dangerously. The Israeli army is intensifying its military offensive in the Palestinian territories. The offensive is characterized by the sustained occupation of Palestinian towns, the destruction of infrastructure and the maintenance of the siege of President Arafat's headquarters, as well as summary executions and arbitrary arrests. The suicide bombing attacks, directed by groups of Palestinian extremists, have greatly increased in number, leading to numerous victims among the Israeli population. We were very encouraged this morning to hear the Permanent Observer of Palestine acknowledge that the suicide bombing attacks are harmful to the interests of the Palestinian people.

In this context of great concern, my delegation welcomes the fact that yesterday in this same Chamber two meetings were held, with the Permanent Representative of Israel and the Permanent Observer of Palestine. Those private meetings were of great usefulness to us and shed light on the position of each party.

Though the two parties commit themselves to implementing resolution 1397 (2002), Israel has signalled some reservations with regard to certain aspects of resolution 1402 (2002). On the question of the ceasefire and withdrawal, Israel would like to obtain the prior cessation of suicide bombing attacks, a principle source of its concern.

For its part, the Palestinian party judges that a solution to the crisis must necessarily include the simultaneous implementation of the political and security issues, as well as the presence of an international force of interposition. As well, my delegation points out the existence of differing understandings of the elements to be implemented in the Mitchell report.

In our opinion, the security question and a political settlement of the conflict are inseparable. In this framework, everything must be done to end the suicide bombings and the Israeli occupation of autonomous Palestinian territories. For this reason, we urge President Arafat and Prime Minister Sharon to demonstrate greater responsibility in the search for a negotiated solution to the conflict. However, to do this, my delegation invites the Israeli authorities to lift their siege so that the Palestinian leader can entirely regain his freedom of movement and action.

My delegation congratulates the courage and lucidity of the Palestinian leader in these critical moments. Mr. Arafat remains the symbol of national Palestinian identity and of the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

The offer the Israeli Prime Minister made to the Palestinian leader of a "one way ticket for exile" is unacceptable, in our view. We will never cease to repeat that President Yasser Arafat is not an obstacle to peace; he remains an inevitable part of the peace process. The achievements of Oslo must be preserved at all costs. The war on peace must stop.

We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the urgent need for the immediate implementation of all provisions of Council resolution 1402 (2002) in order to create favourable conditions for the resumption of dialogue and a final settlement of the Israeli-Arab crisis.

In the light of this, Guinea supports the peace plan adopted by the Arab League Summit recently held in Beirut. Guinea invites all parties to renounce confrontation and violence and to commit themselves with determination to the path of peace in order to ensure the one party's existence and security and the other party's right to an independent State.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Russian Federation.

Russia strongly condemns terrorism in all of its forms, and Russia is convinced that it is impossible to attain political goals through terrorist acts. This fully applies to terrorist acts in Israel, among the victims of which are many of our compatriots.

At the same time, Israel's response should be appropriate to the threat faced today. We condemn all forms of violence. We mourn for the victims on both sides, and we call for an immediate halt to the bloodshed. However, today we have the impression that both sides are behaving in a suicidal fashion and that the raging conflict is threatening to spill over to

the other countries of the region. The madness must be stopped before it is too late. The unprecedented sufferings of civilians in the conflict elicited the extreme concern of the Secretary-General, of all the countries of the world and of many organizations, including the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Rio Group, the European Union and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is the subject of regular contacts between the leaders of Russia and the United States, as co-sponsors of the peace process. This rampage of violence is inflicting suffering on not only the Israelis and Palestinians, but the citizens of other countries, too, including Russians.

We are seriously concerned that Israeli troops are continuing to hold on to the site and building in Bethlehem belonging to the Russian Orthodox Church, where Russian pilgrims are lodged. Russia insists on the speedy release of Russia's property and on the inadmissability of causing any damage to it. On the whole, we are very concerned at the overall alarming situation around various religious holy sites in the territory of the Palestinian National Authority, as a result of the continuing Palestinian-Israeli confrontation.

Halting the confrontation is possible only through joint efforts by the Israelis and the Palestinians and through their return to collaboration to implement the agreements that have been achieved.

If Israel uses indiscriminate acts of force to do the job of the Palestinians by destroying the terrorist infrastructure, and the Palestinians likewise decide to do Israel's work by bringing about a withdrawal from the occupied territories, then the result will be all-out war.

We are convinced that rooting out terror and achieving a settlement, including the creation of a Palestinian State, are in the fundamental interests of both the Israelis and Palestinians, and can be achieved only through peaceful means and direct talks by the parties, in active cooperation with international mediators, who must act in a united fashion. That is why Russia, as a co-sponsor of the peace process and a member of the "quartet", persistently seeks the speedy implementation of resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002), which provide for a comprehensive approach to overcoming the crisis through an immediate ceasefire, the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian towns, the renunciation of any form of terrorism and other acts of violence, the lifting of the economic blockades and the implementation of the Tenet plan and the Mitchell recommendations as preconditions for moving towards a final settlement on the basis of United Nations resolutions and the Madrid principles. The ultimate goal of that process is peace, security and good-neighbourliness between the two States, Israel and Palestine.

We call upon Israel and the Palestinians to take immediate steps to implement resolution 1402 (2002). To this end, it is imperative and urgent to end the isolation of the President of the Palestinian National Authority, Yasser Arafat.

Following talks in Madrid, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Russia, Igor Ivanov, stated today that Russia and the European Union oppose linking the campaign against terrorism with the destruction of the political structure within the Palestinian National Authority.

Today, we have a unique opportunity, not only to halt the cycle of violence, but to achieve the goal of a comprehensive settlement throughout the entire Middle East region. This opportunity has emerged thanks to the unanimous position of members of the Security Council, as reflected in resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002), as well as of the Arab peace initiative, put forward by Saudi Arabia and endorsed at the Beirut Summit. Missing that opportunity would be an unforgivable mistake.

Russia supports the constructive role of the Security Council in helping to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian crisis and will do everything it can to facilitate further practical steps by the Council in this important area.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

There are no further speakers on my list.

The meeting rose at 8.05 p.m.